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Coll. Ball. Oxon.

Vet Ital III B. 240

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Smith

Jan. 1902.

Paget Tryalbee

FRONTISPIECE.

The first interview of Petrarch and Laura.

THE LIFE OF PETRARCH.

COLLECTED FROM

MEMOIRES POUR LA VIE DE PETRARCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

THE SECOND EDITION.

Rarò magni errores nisi ex magnis ingeniis prodiêre.

PETRARCH.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR;

AND SOLD BY J. DODSLEY, IN PALL-MALL;
J. BUCKLAND, IN PATER-NOSTER ROW;
AND T. BECKET, IN THE STRAND.

M.DCC.LXXVI.

——— Who is free from Love?
All ſpace he actuates like almighty Jove!
He haunts us waking, haunts us in our dreams,
With vigorous flight burſts thro' the cottage window:
If we ſeek ſhelter from his perſecution
In the remoteſt corner of a foreſt,
We there elude not his purſuit; for there
With eagle wing he overtakes his prey.

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TO

SOAME JENYNS,

ESQUIRE.

SIR,

YOU have done me great honour, in permitting me to addreſs to you this LIFE OF PETRARCH. It is a very ſincere, though inadequate acknowledgment, for the pleaſure and improvement I have received

from your converſation, and the many elegant and philoſophical productions, with which you have enriched the public.

I am,

SIR,

With the greateſt Reſpect,

Your moſt obliged,

LIVERPOOL,
Feb. 8th, 1775.

and obedient Servant,

SUSANNA DOBSON.

THE

PREFACE.

THE fourteenth century, in which flouriſhed the celebrated Poet whoſe life and fortunes are the ſubject of the following pages, may be conſidered in a very important light as introductory to the clearer and brighter periods that followed.

IN this age many diſcoveries were made, and uſeful arts eſtabliſhed. The manners and cuſtoms

of all Europe from this time began to wear a different aſpect; and from conteſts and diſorders aroſe the ineſtimable bleſſing of liberty, to the kind influence of which, many ſtates owe their preſent flouriſhing ſituation, whoſe ſubjects were formerly ſlaves. Italy, the country which gave birth to Petrarch, was at this time rich and powerful, and ſuperior to all others in the beauties of nature, and the improvements of art: and it was juſt riſing out of the darkneſs of ſuperſtition; for the homage paid to the church in the thirteenth century was carried to ſo high a pitch, that when Cardinals and Prelates appeared, perſons of the firſt

firſt rank went before them to keep off the croud.

THIS blind devotion began to decreaſe in this age; though by degrees ſcarcely perceptible, as the Roman Pontiff ſtill retained his power, and preſided at the helm of all public affairs.

BUT Italy, though ſuperior to the reſt of Europe in her attainments, and many other advantages, was at this period a ſcene of miſery and devaſtation. This delightful country was torn to pieces by the fury of civil diſcord; it became a prey to the factions of the Guelphs and the Gibbelines, which

aroſe partly from the quarrels between the Popes and the Emperors, and partly from ſtruggles occaſioned by the love of liberty. As the Emperor had not paſſed the Alps for ſixty years, moſt of the cities revolted from the Empire, while they continued to be oppreſſed by petty tyrants, or to oppreſs others whom they had conquered; and careleſs both of the intereſts of the Pope, and the Emperor which they had pretended to ſupport, thought only of aggrandiſing themſelves, and expelling their enemies. At the ſame time, the exiled of all parties waited a favourable occaſion of revenge, and of overwhelming, even with the

the ruin of their country thoſe who had oppoſed them. The increaſe of theſe deſolating evils may in a great meaſure be aſcribed to Pope Clement the Vth. who from the love of of his native country had tranſlated the Holy See to France. Rome in particular ſuffered greatly by the abſence of its governor; the uſurpers who invaded it in this abandoned ſtate, caring little for the unavailing thunders, launched at them from Avignon.

SUCH a ſituation of public affairs ſeemed little favourable to the reſtoration of letters. We expect the ſeeds of knowledge and learning to flouriſh only in proſperous ſeaſons,

ſeaſons, and under the ſhade of tranquillity. Nevertheleſs it was in the boſom of diſcord, and amidſt the ſound of arms, that they were ſeen to revive and ſpring up together.

I WILL not pretend to trace all the circumſtances that contributed to this happy event: I will only add, that more was due to the abilities of thoſe great men, who at that time enlightened Italy, and among whom Petrarch held the firſt rank, than has by ſome been attributed to them. Had it not been for their fine genius, the world would probably have continued much longer buried in darkneſs, as the valuable art of printing

ing was not diſcovered till two centuries after this, and manuſcripts of any worth were ſhut up in the cloiſters.

To Petrarch we are indebted for many of theſe manuſcripts; with infinite pains and difficulty he collected and cauſed them to be copied, and by his labours, and thoſe of his contemporaries, the way was opened for the reception of thoſe works, which the Greeks about a century after this brought with them into Italy.

It would be unjuſt not to name ſome of thoſe learned men who engaged with Petrarch in this arduous undertaking, and who, while

nobles

nobles and peaſants were deſtroying one another, helped to lay the foundation on which the ſuperſtructure of ſcience was built. Among theſe was Brunetto Latini, a very great man, though little known in the preſent age; he taught rhetoric, eloquence, and philoſophy.

DANTE, his diſciple, profited by his leſſons, and compoſed that whimſical poem called the Commedia, full of ſublime ideas, cutting ſtrokes of ſatire, and natural beauties, which make it read to this day with admiration, notwithſtanding many defects chargeable on the age in which it was written.

CIMABUE

CIMABUE and Giotto revived the animated art of painting, and drew pictures of extraordinary merit: a celebrated piece of theſe maſters now in the Vatican, is a St. Peter walking on the water.

JOHN VILLANI, the famous hiſtorian, gave to poſterity the facts that paſſed under his knowledge, with a fidelity and candour which ought to have ſerved as a model to all ſucceeding hiſtorians.

RICHARD DE BURY of England, in the beginning, and Malphigi of Florence, in the latter end of this century, ought alſo to be mentioned; but as they are, with Boccace and

and ſeveral others, introduced in the followed memoirs, which comprehend many of the great characters that flouriſhed, and the particular events that paſſed in this period, I will only add further in this view of the revival of letters, that the two famous Engliſh poets, Gower and Chaucer, were alſo contemporaries with Petrarch. The merit of the former is little known. The various beauties interſperſed in the works of Chaucer, and particularly the maſterly ſtrokes of character we find in them, though obſcured by an obſolete language, and mixed with many blemiſhes, ſhew the powers of a fine imagination, great depth

depth of knowledge, and that perfect conception of men and manners, which is the ſureſt mark of an elevated genius. The picture he has given us of thoſe times is indeed ſo animated, that we ſeem actually to converſe with his characters, and are pleaſed to conſider men like ourſelves even in the niceſt reſemblances, under the different circumſtances of an age ſo very remote.

THE above remarks may ſerve to illuſtrate the character of Petrarch, ſo extraordinary for that time, and ſo very intereſting even in the preſent. To render it the more ſo, I have omitted ſome tedi-

ous and minute diſcuſſions, which appeared to me as barren of inſtruction, as deſtitute of amuſement; and all thoſe private obſervations of my author (except that on the Decameron) which ſeem to be ſuggeſted to every thinking reader by the facts themſelves. And with ſtill more reaſon I have avoided every reflection that aroſe in my own mind, on the reading and tranſlating theſe memoirs, except a few remarks with reſpect to the characters of Petrarch and Laura, particularly at the cloſe of their lives, which I thought myſelf obliged to make.

AND I have the rather guarded againſt all ſuch prolix and in-

truſive digreſſions, that I might have room to dwell minutely upon every part of Petrarch's private character, and his admirable letters, thus to exhibit him encircled with his friends, and in the familiar circumſtances of life. It is in theſe ſituations the heart diſcloſes itſelf without diſguiſe or reſerve; all its intricacies are laid open, and we are enabled to form a true judgment of its character: an object, which, next to the great author of nature, is certainly the moſt important to contemplate, as a warning, or as a pattern to the human mind.

And perhaps few characters have

ſet in a ſtronger light the advantage of well-regulated diſpoſitions than that of Petrarch's, from the contraſt we behold in one particular of his life, and the extreme miſery he ſuffered from the indulgence of an affection, which, though noble and delightful when juſtly placed, becomes a reproach and a torment to its poſſeſſor, whenever directed to an improper object. For, let us not deceive ourſelves or others; though (from the character of Laura) they are acquitted of all guilt in their perſonal intercourſe, yet as ſhe was a married woman, it is not poſſible on the principles of religion and morality to clear them from that juſt cen-

ſure which is due to every defection of the mind, from thoſe laws which are the foundation of order and peace in civil ſociety, and which are ſtamped with the ſacred mark of divine authority.

IN this particular of his character, therefore, it is ſincerely hoped that Petrarch will ſerve as a warning to thoſe unhappy minds, who, partaking of the ſame feelings under the like circumſtances, but not yet ſuffering his miſery, may be led, by the contemplation of it, by a generous regard to the honour of human nature, and by a view to the approbation of that all-ſeeing Judge who penetrates

the moſt ſecret receſſes of the heart, to check every unhappy inclination in its birth, and deſtroy, while yet in their power, the ſeeds of thoſe paſſions which may otherwiſe deſtroy them.

As to the cavils or cenſures of thoſe, who, incapable of tenderneſs themſelves, can neither enjoy the view of it when preſented in its moſt perfect form, nor pity its ſufferings, when, as in this work, they appear unhappily indulged beyond the bounds of judgment and tranquillity; to ſuch minds I make no addreſs; well convinced, that as no callous heart can enjoy, neither will it ever be in danger of being

being miſled by the example of Petrarch, in this tender but unfortunate circumſtance of his character.

To ſuſceptible and feeling minds alone Petrarch will be ever dear. Such, while they regret his failings and conſider them as warnings to themſelves, will love his virtues; and, touched by the glowing piety and heart-felt contrition which often impreſſed his ſoul, will ardently deſire to partake with him in thoſe pathetick and ſublime reflections, which are produced in grateful and affectionate hearts, on reviewing their own

lives, and contemplating the works of God.

It is too worthy of our notice here to be omitted, that a man who was the firſt genius of the age in which he lived, and whoſe ſociety was ſought and delighted in by perſons of the higheſt rank and learning, thought it no derogation to his talents or politeneſs, to introduce ſacred and moral obſervations both in his letters and converſation.

There is ſtill another view in which theſe Memoirs will, I truſt, be uſeful and intereſting to the world; I mean in the picture they ſo affectingly exhibit to mortals

mortals of the variation of the human mind, and the viciſſitudes of health and fortune, to which, in the preſent ſtate, beings like ourſelves, are liable in every rank and profeſſion of life; an object ſo juſtly humbling to the pride, and touching to the heart of man when he beholds, *not in tame precept, but lively image*, the nothingneſs of all things here; and is led thereby not to reſt his view, on this little point of time, but to extend it far beyond, and (if I may be allowed ſo to expreſs myſelf) *to join the line of life, to the line of immortality.*

As the Memoirs from which I collected this work were voluminous

and expenſive, and no life of Petrarch, nor any tranſlation from his writings, has ever appeared in Engliſh, I was induced to venture this abridged tranſlation.

It is taken from a French compilation of the life and writings of Petrarch; collected from his Latin and Italian works; from thoſe of contemporary writers, and ſome private manuſcripts granted to the author by the Abbe Bandini; from the regiſters of the ſovereign Pontiffs, who were ſeated at Avignon, communicated to him by Cardinal Torrigiani; and from the Archives of the houſe of Sade preſerved there, in which is Lau-

ra's contract of her marriage, and her will.

FROM theſe ſources, ſome of which were not obtained by the former biographers of Petrarch, who, many of them, were alſo too pedantic and fond of allegory to write ſimple facts, the author of theſe memoirs was enabled to give a more authentic life of Petrarch, than had ever appeared before. From Petrarch's letters alſo in manuſcript, a copy of which was granted to the author from the royal library at Paris, he obtained many rich materials for this work. To theſe, ſays he, was I chiefly attached. The friend-

ſhips

ſhips of Petrarch were tender as well as ſociable; he had a heart that delighted to expand, and to thoſe he loved he opened its moſt ſecret folds with pleaſure. Theſe memoirs have been ſpoken of with the eſteem they deſerve, and only charged with being rather tedious; but in truth this was not ſo eaſy for a writer to avoid, who had many facts to ſettle, as for thoſe who ſhould undertake to collect from theſe facts.

In my endeavour to be leſs minute, I wiſh I may not have failed in the ſpirit of the work; which I undertook chiefly with a view to the amuſement of the Engliſh reader:

der: and conſidered in this light, it will, I doubt not, meet with all the candour it will require. I received ſo much pleaſure from the peruſal of it, independent of the beautiful ſonnets, that I was deſirous of communicating the ſame ſatisfaction to thoſe, who might chooſe to partake of it under this diſadvantage.

As I did not think myſelf by any means capable of transfuſing the ſpirit and elegance of the ſonnets into any Engliſh tranſlation, I have only inſerted a few lines from ſome of them, as they were neceſſarily connected with the ſubject, ſuch as appeared from their ſenti-

ſentiments beſt able to bear a proſe metamorphoſis, might ſerve to enliven the circumſtances to which they refer, or illuſtrate the character of Petrarch, where they particularly mark the delicacy and juſtneſs of his ſentiments. If any readers of the Latin and Italian works of Petrarch, ſhould condeſcend to look into this tranſlation, they will not, I hope, be diſpleaſed with this preſumption, or with the great imperfections they will diſcover through the whole of the work.

POST-

POSTSCRIPT.

I AM happy in this public occaſion of expreſſing my thanks to that friend who was ſo kind to adorn this work with an elegant deſign, taken from Petrarch's firſt ſeeing Laura at the church of St. Claire, and of acknowledging, at the ſame time, that I owe the deſcription of Vaucluſe, the viſion of Laura, and the war between the Naiads and Muſes, with the account of the tempeſt at Naples, to a ſuperior hand; who, could he have commanded more time, would have leſſened my labour, and given the work many beauties of which it is now deſtitute. And alſo that the part of my preface which treats of the political affairs of Italy, and the ſources from whence theſe memoirs were collected, was chiefly taken from the introduction to the French memoirs.

NOR *can I conclude this poſtſcript to my preface, without requeſting a particular friend,*

friend, who moſt kindly intereſted herſelf in the morality, and ſucceſs of this work, and whoſe friendſhip has been many years my boaſt, to accept this grateful acknowledgment for every mark of her favour and indulgence toward me.

THE

THE LIFE OF PETRARCH.

BOOK I.

THE family of Petrarch was originally of Florence, where his anceſtors had diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their probity, and held employments of truſt and honour. Garzo his grandfather was a notary, a profeſſion in higher repute at that time than the preſent. He was a man univerſally reſpected for his candour, and the integrity of his manners. He had an excellent natural underſtanding, and was conſulted as an oracle not only on affairs that

related to his buſineſs, but on the ſublimeſt ſubjects. Philoſophers and learned men diſdained not to apply to him; and though he had never ſtudied, they admired in his anſwers, the ſagacity of his underſtanding and the rectitude of his heart. After having paſſed one hundred and four years in innocence and good works, Garzo died, like Plato, on the day of his birth, and in the ſame bed in which he was born. He had long before predicted the time of his death, which reſembled a ſweet and peaceful ſleep. Thus he went to reſt in the boſom of his family, without pain or inquietude, diſcourſing of God and virtue.

He left three ſons, one of whom was the father of our Petrarch, and engaged in the ſame employment with his anceſtors. He had a ſuperior genius and underſtanding, which would have carried him through every difficulty to a much higher poſt, had fortune ſeconded his talents,

talents, and permitted him to give them full ſcope. As he was active and prudent, he was intruſted by the republic with ſeveral important commiſſions, and would have been appointed to higher offices, had he not been the victim of a faction which cauſed him, together with Dante (who bitterly reſents this treatment in his works) to be baniſhed, and to pay a conſiderable fine. 1300.

Petrarco thus expelled his native city, went to Arezzo in Tuſcany, where he hired a houſe, and waited for ſome favourable period to return to Florence.

At the time of Petrarch's birth, his father was expoſing his life, without ſucceſs, to regain his patrimony; and his mother riſking hers to bring a ſon into the world. The phyſicians and midwives thought her dead for ſome time; at laſt, however, the child appeared, and was baptiſed by the name of Francis, and 1304.

according to the cuſtom there, called Francis Petrarco or Petrarch. The pretext for his father's exile being perſonal, the party which governed Florence permitted the return of his wife, and ſhe choſe to retire to a little eſtate of her huſband's, at Anciſe, in the valley of Arno, fourteen miles from Florence. She took the child with her, who was then only ſeven months old; and in paſſing the river Arno he was near loſing his life. His mother had intruſted him to the care of a luſty man, who fearing his little body might be injured, held him lapped up in a cloth hung at the end of a great ſtick; as we ſee Metabus in the Æneid carry his daughter Camilla. In paſſing the river his horſe fell down, and the man's eagerneſs to ſave the child had like to have deſtroyed them both.

1311. PETRARCH was brought up by his mother at Anciſe till he was ſeven years old. Petrarco, his father, went from place

place to place to gain a maintenance, and when fortune gave him the opportunity came ſecretly to viſit his wife. She had two ſons beſide Petrarch; the one died young; the other, called Gerard, was bred up with his brother.

Petrarco after this loſing all hopes of being re-eſtabliſhed at Florence, reſolved to abandon a country ruined by war, and governed by his enemies. He went to Avignon, a city of France between Lyons and Marſeilles, ſituated on the banks of the Rhone, where a Gaſcon Pope had fixed the Roman ſee. All thoſe Italians who were diſcontented with their preſent fortunes, or deſirous of gaining better, repaired in crowds to this city. Petrarco embarked with his wife and children at Leghorn, in the rougheſt ſeaſon of the year: he arrived ſafely at Genoa, but in the paſſage to Marſeilles, ſo furious a tempeſt aroſe, that they were ſhipwrecked in ſight of the port: however, 1313.

by ſingular good fortune, not a ſoul periſhed.

THE Prince, who was Lord of Avignon at this time, was Charles the II. King of Naples, whoſe ſon Robert proved ſo great a friend to learning and to Petrarch.

THE tranſlation of the holy ſee from Rome to Avignon, was a ſource of infinite diſtreſs to the Italians. Italy was full of diſcord: the Romans diſputed with the Pope the ſovereignty of Rome: he projected a new cruſade; and founded his refuſal of returning to Rome on this ground, that at Avignon he could more effectually proſecute this holy deſign. The French on their ſide complained, that the Court of Rome had changed their manners, and in the room of ſimplicity, had introduced luxury, murder, and every vice. Avignon was no doubt well ſituated for the eſtabliſhment of a court; it

was

was in the bosom of France, and with respect to Europe, the centre of public affairs, and has always been the asylum of the sovereign Pontiffs during their misfortunes. Its vicinity to Marseilles, a port of the Mediterranean, afforded an easy intercourse with Rome, which they might revisit at pleasure. The climate is fine, the air wholesome, the country beautiful, and abounding with every thing which can contribute to the plenty and delight of life. But the Italians, and particularly Petrarch, looked upon it with different eyes; and their prejudices in favour of their native country, so magnificently distinguished both by nature and art, led them to despise every thing they saw beyond the Alps.

Among others who came to settle at Avignon, was a Genoese called Settimo, who brought thither his wife, and a son of the same age with Petrarch. The parents became acquainted, and the chil-

dren formed an union which was indiſſoluble. This friend of Petrarch was called Gui Settimo.

THE amazing reſort of ſtrangers to this ſmall city, made accommodations very dear, and not eaſy to be obtained: this determined ſeveral perſons to fix themſelves in the neighbouring towns, among whom were Petrarco and Settimo; and they gave the preference to Carpentras, a pleaſant town four leagues from Avignon. Petrarch ſome time after, in a letter written to a friend, thanks God for this tranquil ſituation, where he had time to ſuck in that nouriſhment which prepares the mind for more ſolid food.

1314. AT this time a Tuſcan, whoſe name was Convenole, quitted Piſa where he had kept a grammar ſchool, and came to ſettle at Carpentras. Petrarch had been under his care when he was eight years of age. He was now very old; a ſimple honeſt

honeſt man, who though he had taught rhetoric and grammar for ſixty years, poſſeſſed only the theory of his profeſſion. He ſometimes however thought of compoſing, but ſcarcely had he conceived the plan and written the preface, when he changed his deſign and began another work. Petrarch compares him to the ſtone which ſharpens knives, but is dull itſelf. It was from this maſter however he received the firſt leſſons in poetry. Cardinal Colonna, afterwards the great patron of Petrarch, loved to diſcourſe with this ſchool maſter, whoſe ſimplicity amuſed him. He ſaid to him one day, "You have had Doctors, Abbes, Biſhops, "a Cardinal, for your ſcholars! You "loved them all! Among ſo many great "perſons, was there any place in your "heart for our Petrarch?" The good old man could not refrain from tears at this queſtion; declaring always in a moſt ſolemn manner, that of all the ſcholars he

he ever had, Petrarch was the youth he moſt tenderly loved.

A LITTLE time after Petrarch had reſumed his ſtudies under this maſter, Clement the V. came to Carpentras, with a great number of Cardinals: the air of Avignon did not agree with him; or the inquietude of his mind occaſioned by ill health would not ſuffer him to reſt in any place. The change, however, was not ſucceſsful; on which he reſolved to go to Bourdeaux, to try his native air; but was obliged to ſtop at a village near Avignon, where he died. There was a great oppoſition of intereſts in the conclave, and diſputes and quarrels aroſe between the Italians and Gaſcons about a new Pope. Theſe tumults, and the obſequies of Clement, were amuſing objects to Petrarch, now ten years old; at a riper age, they would have penetrated him with the moſt lively grief. Dante, whom

we may conſider as the forerunner of Petrarch, wrote on this occaſion, a fine letter to the diſperſed Cardinals; in which he exhorts them to re-unite immediately, to ſtop this anarchy ſo fatal to the church, and to bring back the holy See to Rome.

After the departure of the Cardinals, Carpentras enjoyed tranquility: Petrarch profited by it, gave himſelf entirely to ſtudy, and made aſtoniſhing progreſs. In the courſe of five years, he learned as much grammar, rhetoric, and logic, as can be taught in ſchools to thoſe of his age. 1317.

The father of Petrarch and the uncle of Gui Settimo having engaged to go together to the celebrated fountain of Vaucluſe, their children were deſirous of accompanying them; a curioſity very natural to perſons of their age. The mother of Petrarch conſented to it with difficulty: ſhe joined to the timidity of her ſex, that

that anxiety which is produced by extreme tenderneſs; the leaſt thing alarmed her, and at that time the ſhorteſt journeys were not taken without danger. But how could ſhe reſiſt the requeſts and careſſes of a beloved child! At laſt ſhe complied, and they ſet out for this retreat. No ſooner were they arrived at the fountain, than Petrarch, enraptured with the charms of this wonderful ſolitude, felt an emotion which made him cry out, Here is a ſituation which ſuits me marvellouſly! Was I maſter of this place, I ſhould prefer it to the fineſt cities! Theſe lively impreſſions were afterwards transfuſed through many of Petrarch's works; and have immortaliſed the beauties of Vaucluſe.

A MIND like Petrarch's, could not be confined in the narrow path of ſtudy which was followed in that age; he ſoon left his ſchool-fellows far behind in the career of learning. Proſper and the fa-

bles of Eſop were the only books the maſters gave their ſcholars to teach them the Latin: and while they were torturing their brains to underſtand theſe, Petrarch, to whom they were only a paſtime, already devoured the works of Cicero, which he had found among his father's books, who loved and reverenced that celebrated writer. And though he could not penetrate his deep thoughts, he taſted the harmony of his language, compared with which the ſtyle of every other author was to him diſcordant. In ſhort, he conceived ſuch a paſſion for theſe writings, that he would have ſtripped himſelf of all he had to purchaſe them.

The time however came, when his father thought it neceſſary to ſeek an eſtabliſhment for his ſon. Science and letters were held in contempt even at Avignon, though the reſidence of the moſt polite and witty court in Europe. Law was the only ſtudy which led to fortune, and

and Petrarcho obſerving the talents of his ſon, hoped he would make a figure in
1318. this profeſſion, and ſent him, not yet fourteen years of age, to ſtudy at Montpellier; a town finely ſituated for health and pleaſure, with a Univerſity famous for the ſkill of its profeſſors, both in phyſic and law. The Roman law had been taught there from the twelfth century. Petrarch ſtudied here four years; but it was ſo much loſt time, for he could not be brought to fix his attention on ſuch dry ſubjects: I could not, ſays he, deprave my mind by ſuch a ſyſtem of chicanery, as the preſent forms of law exhibit.

PETRARCO perceiving his ſlow progreſs, ſent him to Bologna, a place of ſtill higher renown for perſons of this profeſſion; but he ſucceeded no better there than at Montpellier. What a grief to Petrarcho, to find that inſtead of applying to the law, his ſon paſſed whole days in

in reading antient authors, and above all the poets, with whom he was infatuated! He took a journey to Bologna, to remedy if poſſible this evil, which he apprehended would be ſo fatal to his ſon. Petrarch, who did not expect his father, ran to hide the manuſcripts of Cicero, Virgil, and ſome other poets, of whoſe works he had formed a little library; depriving himſelf of every other enjoyment to become maſter of theſe treaſures. Petrarco having diſcovered the place in which they were concealed, took them out before his face, and caſt them all into the fire. Petrarch in an agony of deſpair, cried out, as if he himſelf had been precipitated into the flames, which he ſaw devouring what was moſt dear to his imagination. Petrarco, who was a good man, moved by the lamentations of a beloved child, ſnatched Cicero and Virgil out of the fire half burnt; and holding the Poet in one hand, and the Orator in the other, he preſented them to Petrarch,

trarch, saying, "Take them, my son! "here is Virgil, who shall console you "for what you have lost; here is Cicero, "who shall prepare you for the study "of the laws." Petrarch was touched with so much goodness, and would if possible have gratified so kind a father; but nature was always stronger than his endeavours.

By accident he met with two of the best Poets of that time among the Professors at Bologna; Cino de Pistoye who read the Code, and Cecco de Asoli who taught Philosophy and Astrology. Cino had three disciples who have done him honour, Petrarch, Boccace, and Bartholi. These Poets soon discovered the talents, and the taste for poetry which Petrarch possessed; and instead of opposing they cultivated the latter, and assisted their young disciple in the pursuit of it. His desire of knowing every thing was insatiable,

tiable, the ſureſt mark of ſuperior genius in youth.

At this time he received a letter from Avignon, informing him of the death of his mother. Petrarch ſays, "She was a "woman of rare merit; and though very "handſome, and living where much cor- "ruption of manners took place, not on- "ly her virtue had never ſwerved, but "even calumny had never reached her. "She poſſeſſed a ſolid and rational piety, "which ſhe ſhewed in attending to the "duties of her ſtation, and the care of "her houſe." Petrarco, who had always lived with her in the moſt perfect union, felt his loſs to be irreparable: he was affected with it in ſo lively a manner, that he languiſhed from that time, and not being able to ſurvive ſo dear a companion, died the year after. As ſoon as Petrarch received this melancholy news, he quitted Bologna with his brother Gerard: and they went to Avignon to collect what 1324. 1325.

their parents had left them, and to put their affairs in order.

THESE two orphans, without protection and experience, were much embarraſſed in a city which they ſcarcely knew, having only paſſed through it occaſionally; and where now, neither parents nor friends remained. Their domeſtic affairs were in the greateſt diſorder, ariſing from the villainy of thoſe to whom Petrarco had given them in truſt, and who had appropriated moſt of the effects to themſelves. "To their ignorance, however, "ſays Petrarch, I owed a manuſcript of "Cicero; it was the moſt precious effect "my father had left me." Their property being thus alienated, they had recourſe to the prieſt's habit, as the likelieſt road to ſucceſs.

THIS indifferent ſituation of affairs, did not prevent Petrarch from a good work. Convenole, his old ſchool-maſter,

had given up his ſchool, and dragged out a languiſhing life at Avignon, overwhelmed with age and poverty. Petrarco had aſſiſted him during his life, and Petrarch was now the ſole reſource of this poor old man. He never failed to ſuccour him in his need; and when he had no money (which was often the caſe) he carried his benevolence ſo far, as to lend him his books to pawn. This exquiſite charity, proved an irreparable loſs to the republic of letters; for among theſe books were two rare manuſcripts of Cicero, in which was his treatiſe upon glory. Petrarch aſked him ſome time after, where he had placed them, deſigning to redeem them himſelf. The old man, aſhamed of what he had done, anſwered only with tears. Petrarch offered him money to recover them. Ah! replied he, what an affront are you putting upon me! Petrarch, to humour his delicacy, went no further. Some time after, Convenole went from Avignon, to Prato his native village,

where he died: and the manuſcripts could never be recovered. Petrarch drew up his epitaph, at the requeſt of his countrymen.

1326. The licentiouſneſs of ſuch a city as Avignon, was very dangerous for a youth of Petrarch's free diſpoſitions and lively paſſions; he was now twenty-two years of age: he lived however with his brother in the ſtricteſt union; their taſtes, deſires and projects were nearly the ſame. Inclination led them to frequent public places, and the aſſemblies of the ladies; and the ſtate of their finances put them under the diſagreeable neceſſity of making their court to perſons in favour. A conſiderable part of the day was often employed in dreſſing, and in all thoſe minute particulars which are requiſite to a poliſhed exterior. In a letter which Petrarch wrote to his brother, he ſays, "Recollect "the time when we wore white habits, "on which the leaſt ſpot or a plait ill-

"placed,

" placed, would have been a ſubject of " grief; when our ſhoes were ſo tight, " we ſuffered martyrdom in them: when " we walked in the ſtreets, what care to " avoid the puffs of wind, that would " have diſordered our hair, and the " ſplaſhes of water, that would have " tarniſhed the gloſs of our cloaths." A young man ſo employed could have but little leiſure: that little however was devoted to ſtudy, and counterbalanced his devotion to the gaieties of the world.

The ſcarceneſs of books, rendered it difficult for Petrarch to ſatisfy his deſire of knowledge; the manuſcripts of Latin authors of the Auguſtan age were ſcarce, and of the Greek authors, there were only bad tranſlations which were exceedingly dear; for thoſe who poſſeſſed them, kept them ſhut up as a treaſure. By courage, patience, and addreſs, he often ſurmounted theſe obſtacles: and it is to him we are indebted for many antient authors

which had been loſt had he not collected them with infinite labour. Copies were taken in his preſence, and ſometimes he tranſcribed them himſelf, being out of patience with the tediouſneſs and blunders of the writers he employed.

NOTHING was more eaſy than to err in this road of genius, into which Petrarch was entered. He ſtood in need of an enlightened guide; and he had the happineſs to find ſuch a director in John of Florence, Canon of Piſa, a man reſpected for his age and the gravity of his manners. He had been fifty years in the office of Apoſtolic writer, which though a laborious employment, did not hinder him from improving his underſtanding, by the ſtudy of the antient authors. He had behaved in a ſtormy and corrupt court, with ſuch ſteady virtue, as to acquire great reputation. His converſation was agreeable, and he was ſought by all for his eloquence and wit. Petrarch felt

felt of what conſequence it was to pleaſe a man of ſuch merit. Their country was the bond that united them, if we believe Petrarch, whoſe modeſty gave this reaſon for the affection he was received with by this holy father. "I have "felt, ſays he, in the courſe of my life, "that the ſtrongeſt of all bonds with good "men is the love of their country, and "hatred of it with the wicked." It was no wonder John of Florence took a delight in ſuch a young man as Petrarch. He looked upon him as his own ſon. Not content with directing him in his ſtudies, he entered into all the particulars of his life, aſſiſted him with his advice, and conſoled him in his troubles. He exhorted him to virtue and the love of God; and praiſed him in all places with that warmth, which friendſhip alone can inſpire.

Petrarch, in return for all this goodneſs, placed an entire and unreſerv-

ed confidence in his guide. He delighted to unboſom himſelf to his father; to confeſs to him his chagrins; and to acknowledge his faults. After quitting him, he looked into his own heart; he felt it more tranquil, more inſpired with the love of ſtudy, more diſpoſed to virtue. "One day, ſays he, I went to my father, in one of thoſe deſponding moods which ſometimes takes hold of me. He received me with his uſual kindneſs. What is the matter with you? ſaid he. You ſeem thoughtful, and I am deceived if ſomething has not befallen you. You are not miſtaken, my father, replied I; but it is nothing new; my old cares oppreſs me; you know them; my heart has never been hid from you. I hoped to have riſen above the crowd, and animated by your love, to have arrived at ſomething great. You have often told me, I ſhould be obliged to anſwer before God for the talents which I neglected to cultivate. With ſuch incitements, I applied myſelf with

with ardour to ſtudy, and ſuffered not a moment to be loſt. Yet after all I have done to know ſomething; I find, I know nothing. Shall I quit ſtudy? Shall I enter into another courſe? Have pity on me, my father. Draw me out of the dreadful ſtate I am fallen into. In ſaying this, I burſt into tears. Ceaſe to afflict yourſelf, my child, ſaid he; your condition is not ſo bad as it appears to you. You knew nothing at the time you thought yourſelf wiſe: and you have made a great ſtep towards knowledge in diſcovering your ignorance. The veil is removed; and you now ſee thoſe errors of the ſoul, which an exceſs of preſumption had formerly hid from your eyes. In proportion as we aſcend an elevated place, we diſcover many things we did not ſuſpect before. Launch out into the ſea, and the further you advance, the more will you be convinced of its immenſity, and of the neceſſity of a veſſel to preſerve you on that element. Follow

the

the road you have entered by my advice, and be perſuaded that God will never abandon you. Thoſe diſorders are the moſt fatal, where the evil is not perceived: to know the diſeaſe, is the firſt ſtep towards a cure. Theſe words, like an oracle, re-eſtabliſhed my peace."

PETRARCH tells us that his mind, like his body, excelled in activity rather than ſtrength, and in uprightneſs rather than ſolidity. Moral Philoſophy and Poetry were his chief delight; he loved alſo the ſtudy of antiquity, to which he was the more inclined from an averſion to the age in which he lived. He loved Hiſtory, but he could not bear the diſcord which reigned among Hiſtorians. In doubtful parts, he determined by the probability of the facts, and the reputation of the authors. He applied himſelf to Philoſophy, without eſpouſing any ſect; becauſe he found no ſyſtem which was ſatisfactory. I love truth, ſays he, and not

not ſects. I am ſometimes a Peripatetic, a Stoic, or an Academician, and often none of them; but—ALWAYS A CHRISTIAN. To philoſophize, is to love wiſdom; and the true wiſdom, is Jeſus Chriſt. Let us read the Hiſtorians, the Poets, and the Philoſophers; but let us have in our hearts the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt; in which alone, is perfect wiſdom, and perfect happineſs. It were to be wiſhed, that thoſe who have devoted themſelves to letters, had always followed this rule.

THE time that Petrarch gave up to ſtudy, retarded the progreſs of his fortune; he had as yet no patrons who could make him independent. It was neceſſary therefore to ſeek ſome more profitable ſituation; and one preſented itſelf beyond his utmoſt hopes. He had ſeen at Bologna James Colonna; but though they purſued the ſame ſtudies, and were often together in the ſame ſchools, they formed at that time no union.

union. It is wonderful that two young men of ſuch ſimilar diſpoſitions, and whom nature ſeemed to have united, ſhould at that time ſhow ſo little affection for each other. James Colonna, who remained at Bologna to finiſh the ſtudy of the law after Petrarch quitted that place, returned to Avignon ſoon after. He diſcovered Petrarch in the confuſion of that tumultuous court; and having informed himſelf more particularly about him, he confeſſed, that his countenance had always pleaſed him, and he ſoon admitted him into his familiar friendſhip. To judge of Petrarch's happineſs, we muſt give the picture he has himſelf drawn of James Colonna.

He was, ſays he, of all men one of the moſt amiable; he had a noble and agreeable countenance; and a majeſtic air, which announced a perſon of dignity. He was eaſy in ſociety; gay in converſation; and grave, when ſuch a deport-

ment

ment was proper. He was tender and dutiful to his parents, generous and faithful to his friends, and affable and liberal to all the world. Notwithſtanding his great name, and greater talents, he appeared always humble and modeſt, and with a very diſtinguiſhed figure, his manners were irreproachable. No one could reſiſt his eloquence. It might be ſaid, he held the hearts of men in his hand. Full of candour and frankneſs, his letters, his converſation, diſcovered to his friends all the movements of his ſoul; he was born in France, during the reſidence of his father in that country. Nature gave him a taſte for the ſciences, which he had highly cultivated; but principally thoſe relative to the eccleſiaſtical ſtate. He had read the fathers, as far as they could be read in an age when manuſcripts were rare; and he gave the preference to St. Jerome. This often engaged him in diſputes with Petrarch, who was partial to St. Auguſtin. A man who

had ſo much underſtanding and diſcernment, ſoon diſcovered the merits of Petrarch; who on his part conſidered it as a ſingular happineſs to have acquired the protection and favour of ſuch a Mecænas.

JAMES COLONNA was deſirous of preſenting to his parents ſo amiable a friend. One branch of his family was eſtabliſhed at Avignon; and were the greateſt ornaments of the court of Rome.

IN the quarrels of Italy, they had been great ſufferers; and there is a fine paſſage related of Stephen an anceſtor of this Colonna. When in the heat of battle, and oppreſſed with numbers, one of his friends terrified with the peril in which he ſaw him, ran to his aid, crying out, Stephen! where is your fortreſs? Here it is, he replied with a ſmile, laying his hand upon his heart. And in fact, he had

not

not at that time a ſingle houſe left: Boniface had taken all.

Petrarch ſpeaks with the greateſt freedom of this pope. "We ought not, "ſays he, to offend the vicar of God, "but Boniface had too free a tongue, "and too bitter a ſpirit, for a ſucceſſor of "Chriſt." This among other free things, he wrote in a letter addreſſed to one of the ſubſequent popes. Benedict the XI. revoked the ſentence againſt the Colonnas; and Clement the V. reſtored the hat to the two Cardinals, James and Peter Colonna, at the ſolicitation of the kings of England and France. From the line of Stephen Colonna aroſe the illuſtrious family, which will ſo often appear in a very intereſting light in the courſe of theſe memoirs.

BOOK II.

WE are now to enter upon a very interesting part of the life of Petrarch. About this time he felt the first emotions of that ardent, tender, and constant passion, which was ever after engraved upon his heart. The names of Petrarch and Laura can *never* be separated. 1327.

PETRARCH had received from nature a very dangerous present; his figure was so distinguished, as to attract universal admiration. He appears in his portraits, with large and manly features, eyes full of fire, a blooming complexion, and a countenance that bespoke all the genius

and fancy which ſhone forth in his works. In the flower of his youth, the beauties of his perſon were ſo very ſtriking, that wherever he appeared he was the object of attention. He poſſeſſed an underſtanding active and penetrating, a brilliant wit and a fine imagination. His heart was candid, and benevolent, ſuſceptible of the moſt lively affections, and inſpired with the nobleſt ſentiments of liberality.

But his failings muſt not be concealed. His temper was on ſome occaſions violent, and his paſſions headſtrong and unruly. A warmth of conſtitution hurried him into irregularities, which were followed with repentance and remorſe. "I can aver, ſays he, that from the bottom of my ſoul I deteſt ſuch ſcenes." And in another place, "I ſometimes acted with freedom, becauſe love had not yet become an inhabitant of my breaſt." No eſſential reproach however could be caſt on his manners till after

ter the twenty-third year of his age. The fear of God, the thoughts of death, the love of virtue, and thoſe principles of religion which were inculcated by his mother, preſerved him from the ſurrounding temptations of his earlier life.

After his return from Bologna, he paſſed a whole year among the numerous beauties of Avignon, in a ſtate of calm indifference. Some of theſe beauties were ambitious to make a conqueſt of ſo accompliſhed a youth. Their attentions however were only matter of amuſement; they never reached his heart: and he was at this time, to uſe his own words, "as free and wild as an untamed ſtag." But alas! the moment was faſt approaching, when this boaſted liberty was to be at an end. "Love, ſays he, obſerving that his former arrows had glanced over my heart, called to his aid, a Lady againſt whoſe power, neither wit, ſtrength nor beauty were of the leaſt avail."

On Sunday in the Holy Week, at ſix in the morning, the time of Matins, Petrarch going to the church of the monaſtery of St. Claire, ſaw a young lady, whoſe charms inſtantly fixed his attention. She was dreſſed in green, and her gown was embroidered with violets. Her face, her air, her gait, were ſomething more than mortal. Her perſon was delicate, her eyes tender and ſparkling, and her eye-brows black as ebony. Golden locks waved over her ſhoulders whiter than ſnow; and the ringlets were interwoven by the fingers of Love. Her neck was well formed, and her complexion animated by the tints of nature, which art vainly attempts to imitate. When ſhe opened her mouth, you perceived the beauty of pearls and the ſweetneſs of roſes. She was full of graces. Nothing was ſo ſoft as her looks, ſo modeſt as her carriage, ſo touching as the ſound of her voice. An air of gaiety and tenderneſs breathed around her, but ſo pure

pure and happily tempered, as to inſpire every beholder with the ſentiments of virtue: for ſhe was chaſte as the ſpangled dew-drop of the morn.—Such, ſays Petrarch, was the amiable Laura, and he adds:

"Till this moment, I was a ſtranger "to Love; but its brighteſt flame was "now lighted up in my ſoul.—Honour, "virtue, and the graces, a thouſand at-"tractions, a thouſand amiable conver-"ſations—theſe, O Love! are thy tender "ties! Theſe are the nets in which "thou haſt caught me.—How was it "poſſible for me to avoid this labyrinth? "a labyrinth from which I ſhall never "eſcape."

"In another ſonnet; "Hitherto I fear-"ed not love. My affections, cold as "ice, formed around my heart a chryſtal "rampart. Tears were ſtrangers to my "eyes: my ſleep was undiſturbed: and "I ſaw with aſtoniſhment in others, "what I had never experienced in my-

" ſelf. Such have I been! Alas! what
" am I now?"

" NATURE formed you, ſays Petrarch,
" the moſt ſtriking model of her own
" power. When I firſt beheld you,
" what emotions! Nothing can efface
" the impreſſion you then made. When
" I begin to ſing of Laura, my ſpirits are
" chilled; when I open my lips, my
" voice faulters and ſtops. What pow-
" ers of harmony can equal ſuch a ſub-
" ject?"

VARIOUS have been the opinions concerning Laura. From a comparative view of them with the few particulars to be found of her private life, collected from the archives of the houſe of Sade, and from the writings of Petrarch, it appears ſhe was the daughter of Andibert de Noves, a Chevalier, and that her mother's name was Ermeſſenda. The houſe of Noves held the firſt rank at Noves, a town

town of Provence, two leagues from Avignon, and Laura had a houſe in that city where ſhe paſſed a part of the year. Her father left her a handſome dowry on her marriage, which was made by her mother when ſhe was very young with Hugues de Sade; whoſe family was originally of Avignon, and who held the firſt offices there.

From the whole behaviour of Laura joined to theſe and other facts on record, as we ſhall hereafter ſee, concerning her family, it is clearly proved ſhe was a married woman when Petrarch firſt met with her at the church of the monaſtery of St. Claire. Had it not been ſo, there ſeems little reaſon for her auſterity or his remorſe, which aroſe from the indulgence of a paſſion too violent (as he owns in his dialogue with St. Auguſtin) to be cauſed by a pure affection of mind; as ſome authors have repreſented it: one in particular, who ſays that the Pope,

from his high eſteem and love of Petrarch, offered his holding certain offices in the church, in conjunction with his marriage with Laura; which Petrarch refuſed, ſaying, that his affection would be ſullied by the conjugal tie. One remark alone is ſufficient to invalidate this author's authority. He ſays, that it was Urban the V. who would have granted this licenſe to Petrarch, and Urban was not elected Pope till after the death of Laura.

An old picture of Laura was brought in 1642 to Cardinal Barberini, which had a long time been preſerved in the houſe of Sade at Avignon; and Richard de Sade, then Biſhop of Cavaillon, whoſe authority in this matter was undeniable, proved that this Laura of the houſe of Sade was the Laura of Petrarch: and that all the accounts of her as an allegorical perſon, or of her being at Vaucluſe as the miſtreſs of Petrarch, were the invention

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of romancers, who drew from nothing leſs than facts, and mixed allegory with every thing; and who upon examination are found to be as ill informed in many other material circumſtances concerning Petrarch, as in this reſpecting Laura.

As ſo much has been ſaid on this ſubject by different authors of the life of Petrarch, it ſeemed neceſſary to notice it, and mention the authority on which the facts reſt relative to the marriage and family of Laura. And this has cauſed us to digreſs too long from our hiſtory, to which we will now return.

James Colonna, the friend of Petrarch, had nobly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in a diſpute between the Emperor and the Pope, and had even expoſed his life to the fury of the Emperor's troops which ſurrounded him, while he was the only man who ventured to read the Pope's Bull to a thouſand perſons aſſembled;

bled; and after this he boldly ſaid, "I "oppoſe Lewis of Bavaria; and maintain "that Pope John XXII. is the catholic "and legitimate Pope; and that he who "calls himſelf Emperor, is not ſo." No one replied; and this adventurous ſtep proved ſucceſsful.

1330. THE Biſhoprick of Lombes becoming vacant, John the XXII. gave it, with a diſpenſation on account of age, to James Colonna. A ſmall recompenſe for ſo great a ſervice. If the dignity was above his years, its ſituation in a rude village was little ſuitable to his rank; however, he determined to go and take poſſeſſion. This Prelate was extremely fond of Petrarch's ſociety, and aſked him to accompany him. "He deſired me to do that "as a favour, ſays Petrarch, which he "might have commanded from his ſu-"periority and the aſcendency he had "over me." Influenced by the ſtrongeſt attachment to this friend, Petrarch could

not refuſe him any thing: beſides, he had a curioſity which made travelling very agreeable, eſpecially in ſuch ſociety, and he accepted with joy the propoſal of the Biſhop of Lombes.

They ſet out in 1330, to go from Avignon to Lombes. They traverſed Languedoc; paſſed Montpellier where Petrarch had ſtudied; Narbonne, which Cicero called the bulwark of the Roman empire, and the model of Rome itſelf, to Thouloufe, where they ſpent ſome days; for the love of ſcience and letters rendered it worthy the curioſity of the biſhop and of Petrarch. Martial calls it the Roman Palladium from its taſte for the polite arts; Auſonius, the famous poet of the fourth century, was brought up there. Provincial poetry was more cultivated in Languedoc, than in the other provinces; and Thouloufe was conſidered as the principal ſeat of the Muſes. It was in this reſidence at Thouloufe, and in Gaſcony,

cony, that Petrarch became acquainted with the works of ſome of their famous poets, from whom he is thought to have gathered many beauties.

In their rout from Thouloufe to Lombes, our travellers ſuffered much from bad weather and dreadful roads. The ſituation of the town, and the pleaſures it afforded, did not recompenſe the fatigue of their journey. Lombes is at the foot of the Pyrenean mountains, near the ſource of the Garonne; the town is ſmall, dirty, and very ill built; the country about, dry, unfruitful, and void of all proſpect. The characters, cuſtoms, and converſation of the inhabitants, like their climate, uncouth, rough, and hardened: nothing could be ſo oppoſite to the Italian manners. Petrarch could not reconcile himſelf to them; and beſides this, he dreaded the continual thunders this country is ſubject to, and which are occaſioned by the neighbouring mountains, collecting

collecting almoſt uninterrupted ſtorms. A fine field of pleaſantry this for the biſhop, who loved raillery, and who often bantered Petrarch for his delicacy; though in fact he was aſtoniſhed, to find ſo much courage, ſtrength, and patience in a young man ſoftened by the polite arts. He was pleaſant alſo, upon ſome grey hairs which appeared already, though he was ſcarce twenty-five years old. To this raillery, Petrarch anſwered; "It "conſoles me that I have this in com-"mon with the greateſt men of antiqui-"ty, Cæſar, Virgil, Domitian, &c." Petrarch found however in the manſion of the Biſhop of Lombes a ſufficient recompenſe for what the rudeneſs of the climate and the inhabitants cauſed him to ſuffer. Among the perſons whom his name, his rank, and above all, the character of James Colonna, attached to him, there were two whom our young poet diſtinguiſhed from the reſt, and with whom he formed a tender friendſhip.

THE firſt was Lello, the ſon of Peter Stephani, a Roman gentleman, whoſe family had been always attached to that of Colonna. Petrarch ſays of him, "His "family is Roman and noble, but of "modern origin; his character, how-"ever, and manner of thinking, is that "of antient Rome. He is more enno-"bled by his virtues than his birth; na-"ture has endued him with many ta-"lents which he has cultivated and per-"fected by ſtudy: he is prudent, induſ-"trious, diſcreet, and faithful." So many good qualities rendered him extremely dear to all the Colonnas. Old Stephen Colonna looked upon him as his ſon; his children, as their brother: and he was attached in a particular manner to the Biſhop of Lombes. He was much given to ſtudy from his youth; but afterwards, the unſettled ſtate of his country inclined him to take up arms; which he quitted again in peace, to reſume his books and pen. His wiſdom and his fidelity determined

mined Petrarch to give him the name of Lelius, the friend of Scipio.

The ſecond was called Lewis; he was born near Bar le Duc, in a little country ſituated on the banks of the Rhine, between Brabant and a part of Holland called Compigne. Petrarch, in reſpect to the place of his birth, calls him the Barbarian. "I was aſtoniſhed, ſays he, "to find in this Barbarian, a cultivated "mind, politeneſs, ſweetneſs, and the "moſt agreeable talents. He makes good "verſes, and is perfect in muſic; his "imagination is lively, his converſation "cheerful and eaſy. To this he joins a "rectitude and ſtrength of ſoul, which "renders him capable of beſtowing the "beſt advice." The ſerenity of his manners, his modeſty, and an equality of temper which nothing could diſturb, determined Petrarch to give him the name of Socrates.

With

WITH theſe three friends, Lelius, Socrates, and the Biſhop, Petrarch paſſed a delicious ſummer; almoſt, ſays he, a celeſtial one. "I cannot, he continues afterwards, recall a ſeaſon paſſed ſo agreeably, without regretting it: thoſe were "the moſt delightful days of my life: "ſuch a choſen ſociety was a full compenſation for reſiding in this Gaſcon "village, and could alone conſole me for "the abſence of Laura."

ONE of his great pleaſures was to ſee the young Prelate in his epiſcopal office. In the flower of his age, and with an air of youth which promiſed nothing ſerious, he acquitted himſelf with a gravity and exactneſs that would have been admired in an old Pontiff. When he ſpoke to his people, or to his clergy, he inſpired and impreſſed their ſouls; from the delicacies of a Roman court, he had paſſed into the Pyrenean deſerts, without ſhewing by his air and manner that he had changed

changed his climate. His countenance was always gay and ſerene, his humour always equal; and in a little time he ſo entirely changed the face of the country, that this part of Gaſcony appeared a little Italy.

A CORRESPONDENCE alſo between the Biſhop and John Andre the famous Profeſſor of the Canon Law at Bologna, contributed very much to the amuſement of Petrarch, during his reſidence at Lombes. This man ſo celebrated in his own age, and ſo little known at preſent, was deeply verſed in the civil law, but very ſuperficial in all other knowledge, nevertheleſs by a perverſeneſs of nature not uncommon, he wiſhed to appear perfect in all the ſciences. In his School, inſtead of keeping within his ſubject, he affected to dazzle his ſcholars with a vain parade of erudition, and quoted with emphaſis books, whoſe titles alone he was acquainted with. His ſcholars,

who knew ſtill leſs than he did, admired his memory, and conſidered him as a prodigy of learning. The letters which Andre wrote to the biſhop of Lombes, the moſt loved of his diſciples, were in the taſte of pedantry, and falſe eruditi-on. In them he places Plato and Cicero in the rank of Poets, and makes Ennius and Statius cotemporaries. The biſhop amuſed himſelf with them, and deſired Petrarch to write the anſwers. The re-putation of John Andre, did not impoſe upon Petrarch; the judgment with which he had ſtudied, enabled him to heighten and ſet off the errors and ana-chroniſms with which the Profeſſor's let-ters were filled, and he acquitted himſelf in a very artful and ingenious manner.

After having paſſed all the ſummer, and a part of the autumn at Lombes, the Biſhop came back to Avignon to ſee his father, who was ſoon expected there from Italy. He brought Petrarch with him

him, and preſented him on his arrival to the Cardinal his brother, a man whom he loved and eſteemed, and without whom he could not live. Cardinal Colonna had neither the air nor the manners of his brethren; he was the moſt gentle, unartful and amiable of men; the moſt eaſy to live with; to look at him, you would ſuppoſe him ignorant of his birth and rank: his life was innocent and pure, and he was indulgent to thoſe errors in others, from which the ſuperiority of his own mind had kept him free. He ſpoke to Princes, and even to the Pope himſelf, with a liberty and frankneſs which gave him during his whole life the greateſt credit and authority. A friend of letters and of the ſciences, it was his pleaſure to bring together men of all countries, who had wit and knowledge; and their converſation was his greateſt delight. He knew little of Petrarch; but from the advantageous things the Biſhop of Lombes ſaid of him, he gave him a very kind

reception; and inſiſted on his coming to reſide at his houſe.

THE city of Avignon had given to the Cardinal for his uſe and that of his houſehold, a large ſeat, where the City Hotel and a part of the monaſtery of St. Laurence now ſtands.

"WHAT a happineſs for me, ſays "Petrarch, that a man ſo ſuperior in "every reſpect, never ſuffered me to feel "that ſuperiority! He behaved to me "like a father; a father did I ſay, like "a tender and indulgent brother: and I "lived in his houſe with the ſame eaſe "as I could have done in my own." Undoubtedly this was the very ſituation for Petrarch: none could ſo perfectly ſuit a man of his taſte. It was the rendezvous of all thoſe ſtrangers diſtinguiſhed for their talents and learning, whom the court of Rome drew to Avignon. There was much improvement in theſe ſocieties,

ſocieties, where they reaſoned on all ſubjects with an agreeable and becoming freedom. This was one of the ſources from whence Petrarch drew that prodigious variety of knowledge, ſo aſtoniſhing in the age he lived in, and ſo very difficult to acquire. In theſe aſſemblies he became acquainted with the men of learning of all countries, and correſponded with many of them ever after.

One of theſe was Richard of Bury or Augervile, the wiſeſt man at this time in England, who came to Avignon in 1331. He was ſent thither by Edward the III. his pupil and his king. Edward wrote a letter to the Pope, recommending to him in particular Richard of Bury and Anthony of Beſagnes, whom he had ſent with an embaſſy to his court. The Pope not knowing where he ſhould find room to lodge theſe ambaſſadors as became their dignity, deſired the grand maſter of the Knights of St. John to lend him 1331.

ſome houſes dependent on their commandery. It is probable the motive of this embaſſy was to juſtify this Prince with the Pope, for the violent party he had taken in ſhutting up in a caſtle his mother Iſabella of France; and impriſoning Mortimer, the favourite of that Queen. Richard of Bury had a piercing wit, a cultivated underſtanding, and an eager deſire after every kind of knowledge; nothing could ſatisfy this ardour, no obſtacle could ſtop its progreſs. He had given himſelf up to ſtudy from his youth. His genius threw light on the darkeſt, and his penetration fathomed the deepeſt ſubjects. He was paſſionately fond of books; and laboured all his life to collect the largeſt library at that time in Europe. A man of ſuch merit, and the miniſter and favourite of the King of England, was received with every mark of diſtinction in the ſociety of Cardinal Colonna.

Petrarch was happy to unite himſelf to ſo great a ſcholar; from whom he might receive much information, eſpecially on the ſubjects of antient hiſtory and geography, which he was then particularly ſtudying. Theſe two men, equally eager to make new diſcoveries in ſcience, had ſeveral conferences. Petrarch mentions only one of them, which relates to the iſland of Thule: he wiſhed to be informed concerning its real ſituation, ſo doubtfully ſpoken of by the antients; and which the beſt geographers placed ſeveral days voyage to the North of England.

Richard either could not, or did not chuſe to communicate any material diſcovery; but told Petrarch he muſt recur to his books when he returned home, for an eclairciſſement on this ſubject. His ſtay at Avignon was ſhort; Edward, who could not do without him, recalled him to England ſoon after. On his return,

he poſſeſſed all the confidence and favour of his maſter, who firſt made him Biſhop of Durham, Chancellor the year following, then High Treaſurer, and Plenpotentiary for a treaty of peace with France.

RICHARD of Bury did in England, what Petrarch did all his life in France, Italy, and Germany. He gave much of his attention, and ſpent a great part of his fortune, to diſcover the manuſcripts of antient authors, and have them copied under his immediate inſpection. Richard, in a treatiſe he wrote on the love and choice of books, relates the incredible expence he was at, to form his famous Library, notwithſtanding he made uſe of the authority which his dignity and favour with the King procured him. He mentions the arts he was obliged to uſe, to compaſs his deſign; and informs us, that the firſt Greek and Hebrew Grammars that ever appeared, were derived from his labours: he had them compoſed for the Engliſh ſtudents, perſuaded

ſuaded that without the knowledge of theſe two languages, and eſpecially the Greek, it was impoſſible to underſtand the principles of either the antient heathen or chriſtian writers. And ſpeaking of France in this book, he ſays; "The "ſuperior ſciences are neglected in France, "and its militia is in a languiſhing ſtate." Petrarch had not the happineſs of ſeeing this great man again, being abſent when he was ſent on a ſecond embaſſy to the court of Avignon, at the time the war between France and England began to break out. And Richard's numerous affairs prevented his anſwering the letters of Petrarch. He died in 1345. And his character has been enlarged upon from the great importance it bore in the political, and the great uſe it was of to the learned world.

Cardinal Colonna had not only a taſte for Petrarch's converſation, but ſoon became ſenſible of the truth and candour of

of his ſoul; and ſhewed him a confidence and diſtinction, extremely flattering to the ſelf-love of our young poet. There was a great quarrel in the Cardinal's houſehold, which was carried ſo far that they came to arms. The Cardinal wiſhed to know the bottom of this affair; and that he might be able to act with juſtice, he aſſembled all his people, and obliged them to take oath on the goſpels, that they would declare the whole truth. Every one without exception was obliged to ſubmit to this determination; even Agopit, biſhop of Luna, the brother of the Cardinal, was not excuſed. Petrarch preſenting himſelf, in his turn, to take the oath; the Cardinal ſhut the book, and ſaid, "Oh! as to you, Petrarch, your word is ſufficient." The Athenians behaved in the ſame manner to Xenocrates the Philoſopher.

THERE lived with the Cardinal ſeveral of his brothers, who had devoted themſelves

ſelves to the church; and they all ſeemed to diſpute with each other, who ſhould ſhew the tendereſt affection to Petrarch. An uncle alſo of the Cardinal delighted infinitely in that love of knowledge and taſte for converſation he perceived in him. He was called Jean de St. Vit; he was Lord of Genſano, and maintained the ſiege of Nepi againſt the army of Cruſaders, ſent there by Boniface the VIII. and being conſtrained to ſurrender the place, he rambled up and down the world to avoid the fury of Boniface, the moſt revengeful of men. He travelled into Perſia, Arabia, and Egypt; at laſt, tired of living this wandering life, he came back to enjoy the ſweets of repoſe in the houſe of the two Cardinals, James and Peter Colonna, one of whom was his uncle, the other his brother. To a mind lively and judicious, Jean de St. Vit joined a great variety of knowledge, acquired in his travels, which rendered his converſation as uſeful as it was agreeable.

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To diſſipate the chagrins of this good old man, Petrarch wrote a Comedy in Latin verſe, called Philologia, which ſome years after he ſuppreſſed, probably with ſome reaſon, as the ſubject of univerſal learning ſeems an improper one for the nature of comedy: but the motive for his writing it, ought not to undergo the ſame fate. Petrarch did not long enjoy the ſociety of Jean de St. Vit: this old man, almoſt blind, and harraſſed with the gout, had a reſtleſsneſs of mind which did not permit him to remain in the ſame place; and a keenneſs of temper which drew upon him very powerful enemies in the court of Rome. They inveighed againſt him with fury; and notwithſtanding his name, and the great credit of his family, they got him exiled to Italy, his native country. Though he might probably wiſh to reviſit Italy and Rome, he was chagrined to do it in this manner, and ſubmit to the triumph of his enemies. It was with ſincere regret

he quitted his friends at Avignon, and above all his dear Petrarch. He wrote frequently to him to expreſs his concern for the ſeparation, and ſhewed great impatience for having been detained by unfavourable winds from his place of deſtination. Petrarch anſwered theſe letters, full of ſpleen and weakneſs, in the tone of a philoſopher and maſter who reproves his diſciple. We are aſtoniſhed that a young man of a free and gallant diſpoſition, ſhould addreſs an old Lord of the houſe of Colonna in ſuch terms. Petrarch felt the impropriety, and therefore adds: "Be not offended at the contraſt "of my life and my leſſons: forget who "it is that adviſes you. Have not you "ſometimes ſeen a phyſician pale and "waſted by a diſeaſe which had reſiſted "all his art, cure another, though he "could not heal himſelf?"

The concern of the Colonnas for the loſs of this friend, was ſucceeded by the greateſt

greateſt joy, on the arrival of Stephen Colonna at Avignon, that great man ſo famous for his courage and reſources, in the cruel extremities to which the rage of Boniface had reduced him. The troubles of Rome which ſtill continued, drew him this year to the court of the Pope, with whom he came to concert the means of re-eſtabliſhing peace in his country; and with joy ſeized this occaſion of again ſeeing a part of his family. Petrarch longed impatiently to know a hero of whom he had conceived the higheſt idea, from the voice of fame. It has been ſaid, that heroes loſe their conſequence, when viewed in a familiar light: but the preſence of Stephen Colonna only ſerved to increaſe the admiration and reſpect of Petrarch, who ſoon inſinuated himſelf into his heart. This gay and affable old man enjoyed the fire of Petrarch's imagination, and was much amuſed with his curioſity and enquiries. But the violent love Petrarch had for Rome, which

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the reading of Livy had confirmed into a ſort of idolatry, contributed moſt of all to faſten the bonds that united him with Stephen Colonna. He delighted to converſe with Petrarch on this ſubject, to ſpeak of the grandeur of antient Rome where he held the firſt rank, and to explain to him the auguſt and precious monuments which ſtill ſubſiſted.

Stephen Colonna did not make a long ſtay in this court; his love of his country, and his affairs, recalled him ſoon after to Rome. He had brought with him to Avignon, Agapit his grandſon, deſigned for the eccleſiaſtical ſtate, to have him brought up under the inſpection of the cardinal and biſhop his uncle. Theſe prelates joined with the father in intreating Petrarch to undertake his education. As he was fond of liberty above all things, he was much diſinclined to this office; but his obligation to friends, who had overwhelmed him with favours,

left him not the liberty of a refuſal. This young man did not ſecond his endeavours, or anſwer his great name. It muſt be allowed, that Petrarch's violent attachment to Laura, which was now extremely increaſed, rendered him not very equal to ſuch a charge. To this intereſting part of his life it is now high time to return.

He ſays, "I run every where after Laura, but ſhe flies from me as Daphne fled from Apollo." In the ſonnets of Petrarch concerning Laura there is a perpetual alluſion to the laurel and Daphne. She was the daughter of the river Peneus; the Gods changed her into a laurel, to ſhelter her from the purſuit of Apollo, who ran after her along the banks of this river: "Since you cannot be my wife then, ſaid he, you ſhall at leaſt be my laurel:" and from that time the laurel-tree was conſecrated to that God.

From the laurel being conſecrated to Apollo,

Apollo, who was the god of poetry, they afterwards crowned the poets with it. Love had ſo ſtrangely united in the ſoul of Petrarch the idea of Laura and the laurel, from a romantic impreſſion allowable to the poets, that on the ſyſtem of Pythagoras, he ſuppoſed the ſoul of Daphne, who was changed into the laurel, had paſſed into the body of Laura after a long ſucceſſion of tranſmigrations. Indeed, Love aſſociated the idea of Laura with every thing he ſaw: he could not behold the laurel without tranſports, and he planted it in every place. Petrarch went often and ſeated himſelf at the foot of one of thoſe trees, on the ſide of a river, a place where Laura frequently paſſed. The ſituation was delightful; it was her favourite walk. When ſhe was not there herſelf, every thing around preſented her image to Petrarch, and his poetical raptures rekindled.

"On this bank, and under the ſhelter of "this charming tree, I ſing with tranſports

" the praiſes of Laura. The gentle mur-
" murs of the ſtream accompany my ten-
" der ſighs: the refreſhing ſhade tempers
" the ardour of my paſſion: theſe alone
" are the objects which have power to
" relieve my ſoul."

PETRARCH, notwithſtanding the ſufferings he underwent from the natural agitations of a tender love when the object is rarely preſent, yet owns that Laura behaved to him with kindneſs ſo long as he concealed the paſſion that was labouring in his boſom; but when ſhe diſcovered it, and that he was captivated with her charms, ſhe treated him with more ſeverity. Not that he had dared as yet to confeſs his paſſion; love like his is not capable of declaration, but it is as impoſſible to hide its power, as to expreſs its force. Laura, perceiving that Petrarch followed her every where, ſolicitouſly avoided him; and when by accident they met in public, if

he

he came up to her, ſhe left the place immediately. The tender looks he caſt upon her, determined her never to appear in his preſence without a veil; and if by rare accident it was not over her face, as ſoon as ſhe ſaw Petrarch, ſhe made haſte and covered herſelf. Many and lamentable were his complaints againſt this cruel veil, which hid from his view ſuch admirable beauties. Theſe rigours in the conduct of Laura, rendered Petrarch ſtill more timid than before; though he was always extremely ſo—a ſtrong character of true love. Dazzled by the luſtre of her beauty, and the magnificence of her dreſs; for ſhe wore on her head a ſilver coronet, and tied up her hair with knots of jewels, (a prodigious magnificence for that time) terrified alſo with the ſeverity of her looks, he had not courage to ſpeak to her. Ah! ſaid he to himſelf one day, was I to ſee the luſtre of thoſe bright eyes extinguiſhed by age; thoſe golden locks changed to ſilver; the flowers painted on that

complexion faded away; was I to ſee Laura without her garland, without her ornamented robe; I feel I ſhould be more courageous. I ſhould ſpeak of my ſufferings with confidence, and perhaps I ſhould not then be refuſed her ſighs.

PETRARCH, though treated with ſo much ſeverity, was not diſheartened. Occupied conſtantly with the pleaſing hope of ſeeing his beloved object, to whoſe houſe it does not appear he was at this time admitted, he went to all the feſtivals; and was in every place where ladies aſſembled. Laura appeared among thoſe beauties who ornamented the city of Avignon, like a fine flower in the middle of a parterre, eclipſing all the reſt with its luſtre and the brightneſs of its colours. What a delight to Petrarch to enjoy ſo lovely a ſight! His affection increaſed; he applauded himſelf for ſo excellent a choice; nothing appeared to him ſo honourable as his attachment to Laura.

The

The reſpect he had for her, the admiration that her virtue inſpired, led him to ſelf-reflection, and to diſengage himſelf from ſome connexions little to his honour or advantage.

"I BLESS the happy moment, ſays Petrarch, that directed my heart to Laura. She led me to ſee the path of virtue, to detach my heart from baſe and groveling objects: from her I am inſpired with that celeſtial flame which raiſes my ſoul to heaven, and directs it to the Supreme Cauſe, as the only ſource of happineſs."

AT this time, a Lady who had heard of Petrarch's reputation, conſulted him on a ſubject in which he was much intereſted. She was an Italian; her father was a man of wit and merit, and had given his daughter an education ſuperior to what was uſually beſtowed on young women at that time. From her earlieſt years ſhe was inſpired by the Muſes. The people of the world made a joke of

her, and ſaid, "The buſineſs of a wo-
"man is to ſew and ſpin; ceaſe to aſpire
"after the poetic laurel; lay down your
"pen, and take up the needle and diſ-
"taff." Theſe words diſcouraged her; ſhe was tempted to renounce poetry, yet could not determine without reluctance. In this ſituation, ſhe addreſſed herſelf to Petrarch in a poem, the ſenſe of which is as follows:

"O THOU! who by a noble flight haſt
"arrived ſo early at the ſummit of Parnaſ-
"ſus, tell me what part ought I to act?
"I would fain live after I am dead: and
"the Muſes can alone give me the life
"I deſire. Do you adviſe me to devote
"myſelf to them, or to reſume my do-
"meſtic employments, and ſhield my-
"ſelf from the cenſure of vulgar minds,
"who permit not our ſex to aſpire after
"the crowns of laurel or of myrtle."

PETRARCH replied thus:

"IDLENESS

" Idleness and the pleaſures of the " table have baniſhed all the virtues; " the whole world is changed; we have " now no light to direct our way; the " man inſpired by the Muſes is pointed " at; the vile populace who think of " nothing but advancing their intereſt " ſay, Of what uſe are crowns of laurel " or myrtle? Philoſophy is abandoned, " and goes quite naked. O thou! whom " Heaven has endued with an amiable " ſoul, be not diſheartened by ſuch ad- " vice! Follow the path you have enter- " ed, though it is but little frequented."

In this year, 1332, John of Luxem- 1332.
bourg King of Bohemia came to Avignon to unite with the Pope, in ſubjecting all Italy, of which in part he had already made himſelf maſter. The fear of theſe powers in union, did what the Popes had for two centuries vainly attempted; it united the Guelphs and the Gibelines to defend their country. Robert King of

Naples, of whom we ſhall have much to ſay hereafter, was the chief of the Guelph party, and joined with many other Italian Princes againſt the King of Bohemia; and the Emperor of Germany alſo raiſed up enemies who diſconcerted this Prince's projects, and obliged him to return and defend his own kingdom. He left the command of his army to his ſon Charles, a prince ſixteen years old, who had been brought up at Paris, and promiſed the greateſt things: we ſhall find him, when Emperor, honouring Petrarch with ſingular marks of favour. After the King of Bohemia had eſtabliſhed peace in his kingdom he came to Avignon, where he paſſed fifteen days in ſecret conferences with the Pope, from whence he went to Paris to aſk aſſiſtance of Philip de Valois, with whom he contracted a new alliance by the marriage of his daughter with Philip's eldeſt ſon. Soon after which he re-entered Italy with the conſtable of France and

the flower of the French nobility. This redoubled the alarm of the Italians, and the grief of Petrarch, who idolized his native country, and trembled leſt it ſhould come under the dominion of ſlaves, for thus he called the French and the Germans. Things turned out however very differently from what was expected, and the Italians gained a complete victory, notwithſtanding the great valour of the French nobility.

Petrarch at this time formed a deſign of travelling; he wiſhed to follow the example of Ulyſſes, Lycurgus, Solon, Plato, and Pythagoras. He thought with Homer, that it was the beſt plan for forming youth; and to uſe his own words, "that we muſt expel ignorance by the exerciſe of the mind and of the body." It was not eaſy for him to obtain the permiſſion of his patrons. The Biſhop of Lombes propoſed alſo to go to Rome: ſome family affairs required his preſence,

preſence, and Petrarch was to follow him. This journey was the object of his moſt ardent wiſh, but he was deſirous firſt to ſurvey France and Germany, where he flattered himſelf with finding many good manuſcripts of antient authors. The Prelate, who would not go to Rome without him, had the kindneſs to aſſure him he would wait for his return, and they ſhed many tears on this ſeparation.

PETRARCH could never have reſolved to leave Avignon, had he experienced kinder treatment from Laura: but ſhe had forbade him ever to ſee or to ſpeak to her. Scarcely however was he got out of the city, when he repented the ſtep he had taken: for he felt he could not live without Laura, and he was almoſt determined to return immediately; at laſt he took courage, and continued his rout.

CARDINAL COLONNA deſired Petrarch to

to ſend him a very exact account of all he ſaw and heard, and to give him without ornament or care all that came into his mind. Only two of theſe letters remain: Petrarch confeſſes that puſhed on by the ardour of youth, he made this journey with too much precipitation, and therefore ſaw few things in the manner he ought. They ſhew, however, the pen of a maſter, compared with the writings of this period; and are as follows:

"I ran over France, without any buſineſs there, from the mere impulſe of curioſity. I have ſeen the famous capital of the Gauls, which boaſts it had Julius Cæſar for its founder. When I firſt entered this city, my feelings were very like thoſe of Apuleius, when he entered for the firſt time into Hypate, a city of Theſſaly full of magicians, of whom he had heard many wonders. I paſſed ſome time there, eager to ſee and know every thing; occupied in diſtinguiſhing right and wrong, and

and often ſtruck with aſtoniſhment and admiration. When the days were not long enough, I employed a part of the night in reſearches concerning the fabulous or true origin of this much famed place. Paris is without doubt a great city, but much below the reputation the French have given it: for my own part, I have not any where met with ſo naſty a place, except Avignon. When I left Paris, I took the rout of Flanders and Brabant, where the people are employed in tapeſtry, and woollen works. I ſhall only ſpeak of the principal towns, and thoſe in which I have obſerved any thing remarkable. Ghent is one of the largeſt cities in Flanders; it boaſts alſo of having Julius Cæſar for its founder."

"LIEGE is conſiderable from its wealth and the number of its clergy: as I had heard there were ſome good manuſcripts to be met with I ſtopped there. Is it not ſingular that in ſo celebrated a city,

city, I could hardly find ink enough to copy two orations of Cicero? and what I did meet with was yellow as ſaffron."

"Aix la Chapelle is a famous city, it was here Charlemagne eſtabliſhed the ſeat of his empire; he cauſed a temple to be built, wherein is his mauſoleum, which theſe barbarous people revere. Near this city, was a marſh, which he delighted in, where he built on piles of wood, a palace and a church which coſt immenſe ſums. Here he ended his life, and in this place is the temple where he was buried. He ordered that his ſucceſſors ſhould be crowned here, a practice ſtill obſerved. I have profited from this ſituation by uſing the bath: the waters have the ſame degree of heat as thoſe at Bois, and have very nearly the ſame effects."

"From Aix la Chapelle, I went to Cologne, a city celebrated for the beauty of its ſituation on the banks of the Rhine,

Rhine, and for the number of its inhabitants; I was ſurpriſed to find ſo much urbanity in a city of Barbarians, ſuch honeſt countenances in the men, and ſo exact a neatneſs in the women. I got there in the evening. How aſtoniſhed was I to find friends I had never ſeen? and whom I owed to a falſe reputation, rather than real merit. You will be ſurpriſed that under this part of heaven one ſhould find ſouls inſpired by the Muſes; I do not ſay that there are Virgils, but I have met with ſeveral Ovids. This poet was right, when he ſaid at the end of his Metamorphoſes, that he ſhould be read with pleaſure wherever the Roman name was known."

"THE ſun was declining: and ſcarcely was I alighted, when theſe unknown friends brought me to the banks of the Rhine, to amuſe me with a ſpectacle which is exhibited every year on the ſame day, and on the ſame place. They conducted me to a little hill, from whence I could diſcover all that paſſed along

along the river. An innumerable company of women covered its banks: their air, their faces, their dreſs ſtruck me. No one who had a heart at liberty, could have defended himſelf from the impreſſion of love: alas! mine was far from a ſtate of freedom. In the midſt of the vaſt crowd this ſight had drawn together, I was ſurpriſed to find neither tumult nor confuſion; a great joy appeared without licentiouſneſs. How pleaſant was it to behold theſe women; their heads crowned with flowers, their ſleeves tucked up above their elbows, with a ſprightly air advancing to waſh their hands and arms in the river. They pronounced ſomething in their language which appeared pleaſing, but I did not underſtand it. Happily I found an interpreter at hand: I deſired one who came with me to explain to me this ceremony. He told me it was an antient opinion ſpread among the people, and particularly the women, that this luſtra-

tration was neceſſary to remove all the calamities with which human beings are threatened in the courſe of the year; and when this was done, they had nothing to fear till the following year, at which time the ceremony muſt be renewed. Happy, replied I, the people who inhabit the borders of the Rhine, ſince this river runs away with all their miſeries. How happy ſhould we be in Italy, if the Tiber and the Po poſſeſſed the ſame virtue! You embark your misfortunes on the Rhine, which carries them to the Engliſh; we ſhould willingly make the ſame preſent to the Africans and to ſlaves, if our rivers would be burdened with the load. After a great deal of laughing, the ceremony concluded, and we retired."

"I WAS five or ſix days in this city, remarking its antiquities and wonders. I came next to Lyons, which is a Roman colony more antient than Cologne; there we ſaw two noted rivers, the Rhone and the Saone, unite their waters to carry them with

with the greater expedition into our ſea. They run together to waſh the banks of that city, where the Roman Pontiff holds in his hand the whole human race."

"When I arrived here this morning, I found a man of your retinue who informed me of your brother's departure for Rome. This news, which I did not expect, has made me feel for the firſt time the fatigue of my journey. I ſhall reſt here ſome time, and wait till the great heats are a little abated. I write to you in a hurry, becauſe I wiſh to take the opportunity of a courier who is going from hence to inform you where I am. I write to your brother, to complain of his having left me in the lurch. He was formerly my guide; I would now call him if I dared, my deſerter. Have the goodneſs to forward this letter to him as ſoon as poſſible."

In this relation of Petrarch's journey,

we ſee that the inhabitants of modern as well as of antient Rome conſidered all the people beyond the Alps as Barbarians. And he adds in a poſtſcript to the Cardinal:

"I HAVE ſeen fine things it muſt be allowed in the courſe of my journey; I have examined the manners and the cuſtoms of the countries through which I paſſed; I have compared them with ours, and found nothing which gave me cauſe to repent that I was born in Italy: on the contrary, the more I travel, the more I love and admire my own country."

PETRARCH departed from Cologne the laſt day of June; he went to Lyons, where he deſigned to embark on the Rhone to return to Avignon. In this rout, he was ſo incommoded with heat and duſt, that he ſeveral times wiſhed for the ſnows of the Alps and the ice of the Rhine, of which Virgil ſpeaks in his tenth

tenth Eclogue. Nevertheleſs he paſſed through a great part of the foreſt of Ardenne, which contained at that time the greateſt part of Flanders. No one dared to paſs this foreſt without a guard; it was full of thieves and banditti, who ſet themſelves in ambuſcade behind the trees, from whence they ſhot their arrows at paſſengers without being perceived. And the war between the Duke of Brabant and the Count of Flanders, who diſputed with one another the ſovereignty of Malines, rendered the paſſage of the Ardenne ſtill more perilous, by the inroads of ſoldiers from both their armies. Petrarch however took no guard. Alone and without arms he dared to traverſe theſe gloomy foreſts, which no one, as he himſelf ſays, could enter without a ſecret horror. As he could not ſee a knot of trees without a poetic inſpiration, it is not to be wondered at that he ſhould be inſpired in the midſt of the greateſt foreſt in Europe; and as he himſelf ſays, "that Love

ſhould enlighten the ſhades of Ardenne, where Laura appeared in every object, and was heard in every breeze." What was his delight when approaching Lyons, he diſcovered the Rhone which in carrying its tribute to the ſea, waſhes the walls of that city, which was ornamented by the object of his love!

CARDINAL COLONNA was charmed to ſee Petrarch again, and informed him of the reaſon of the Biſhop's unexpected departure for Rome; which was occaſioned by a quarrel in Italy, in which the family of the Colonnas had great concern. This relieved the anxiety of Petrarch, whoſe tender love for the Biſhop of Lombes could not eaſily brook the diſappointment of this ſeparation.

PETRARCH, who during the whole courſe of his journey was conſtantly poſſeſſed with the image of Laura, was no ſooner returned to Avignon than he watched

watched an opportunity of ſeeing her, 1334.
flattering himſelf ſhe would be more ſenſible of his attention. But ſhe was ſtill the ſame, and continued to treat him with that rigour of which he before ſo bitterly complained. He compares Laura to the ſnow which has never ſeen the ſun for years.

"If I am not deceived in my calculation, adds he, it is now ſeven years that I have ſighed night and day for Laura, and have no hope of being ever able to touch her heart." The coolneſs of the fountain of Vaucluſe, the ſhade of the wood which ſurrounded the little valley that leads to it, appeared to him the moſt proper ſituation to moderate the ardour of his mind: he went there ſometimes. The moſt frightful deſerts, the blackeſt foreſts, the moſt inacceſſible mountains, were to him delightful abodes; but they could not ſhelter him from love, which followed him

every where, and penetrated through the hardeſt rocks.

" THE more deſart and ſavage the " ſcene around me, the more lively is " the form in which Laura preſents " herſelf to my view. The mountains, " the woods, and the ſtreams all ſee " and witneſs my anguiſh: no place is " ſo wild or ſavage, where I am not " purſued by love."

SOMETIMES he called death to his ſuccour; his health altered viſibly; the idea of death and the uncertainty of what might be his ſtate hereafter, filled his ſoul with trouble; he ſaw all the miſery of his condition; he made ſtrong reſolutions to overcome his paſſion; but love was always victorious. In vain he repreſented to himſelf, that time flew ſwiftly over his head, that his hopes were vain and frail, and his body decaying apace; that the ſource of his joy and

of his grief, of his diſguſt and of his fears, would with that be ſoon deſtroyed; and that the eye of truth would then clearly diſcern how little ſuch fooliſh purſuits and ſuch frivolous pleaſures, merited the attention and anxiety of human beings.

In a ſituation ſo mournful and critical, Petrarch had recourſe to an Auguſtine monk called Dennis de Robertis, born in the village of St. Sepulchre near Florence. This monk entered early into that order, in which he diſtinguiſhed himſelf by his underſtanding and his talents; he made a voyage to Avignon, where he attached himſelf to cardinal Colonna, to whom he dedicated one of his works, entitled Commentaries on Valerius Maximus. His reputation gained him an invitation to Paris, where he read lectures on philoſophy and theology with great ſucceſs, and ſhone in the principal pulpits there. He paſſed for an univerſal genius; in reality he was an orator, a poet, a philoſopher,

a theologiſt, and a teacher. It was at Paris that Petrarch became acquainted with this monk, and diſcourſed with him on the ſtate of his ſoul. Father Dennis ſaid every thing that an able adviſer could ſay to a young man, to cure him of a paſſion which ſo cruelly oppreſſed him. Petrarch had conceived the greateſt veneration for this father; he continued to write to him to implore his advice, and to ſolicit remedies for the cure of his paſſion: moſt of theſe letters are loſt, which are greatly to be lamented; there are only a few of Petrarch's remaining, which will be diſperſed through theſe memoirs. We ſhall ſoon ſee the little ſucceſs of father Dennis's advice, notwithſtanding his ſkill and his extenſive knowledge; but who does not know, that one look from a beloved miſtreſs is ſufficient to deſtroy whole years of counſel from a ghoſtly father?

THE city of Avignon underwent this year a very ſingular kind of plague. The heat

heat and drought were ſo violent, that perſons of every age and ſex changed their ſkins like ſerpents; it fell in ſcales from the face, the neck, and the hands. The populace ſeized as with madneſs ran half naked about the ſtreets, with whips in their hands, ſcourging their fleſh, ſupplicating with the moſt dreadful outcries for rain, and that a ſtop might be put to this terrible calamity. Thoſe who eſcaped this diſorder, which were very few, were thought to have bodies of iron. Nothing like it had ever been remembered. The conſtitution of Laura was too delicate to ſuſtain ſo great an intemperature in the air; ſhe was attacked with a violent diſorder which alarmed Petrarch in a moſt lively manner; he aſked the phyſician who attended her how ſhe was; he replied, extremely ill; and there was every thing to fear for her. Laura recovered however, and Petrarch was relieved from his diſtreſs.

On his return from Germany, Petrarch found the Pope ſeriouſly employed at the age of fourſcore and ten years, on two great projects which required all the vigour of youth. The one was the cruſade, the other was the re-eſtabliſhment of the holy ſee at Rome. The unhappy conſequences of former wars undertaken againſt the infidels, to diſpoſſeſs them of the holy places they were maſters of, had cooled the pious fury which had depopulated Europe to ravage Aſia. It is difficult to comprehend how a Pontiff ſo enlightened and experienced, could ſeriouſly enter on a project, which in the preſent ſituation of Europe was ſo chimerical. Petrarch himſelf, though full of outrageous zeal for theſe holy enterpriſes, knew all the difficulties that attended them.

Philip of Valois, king of France, ſent ambaſſadors to the Pope, to concert proper meaſures for this great undertaking; and

and they promiſed on oath in the name of this prince that he ſhould embark in three years for the Levant, at the head of an army. The pope declared Philip the chief of this enterpriſe, and granted him for ſix years the tenths of his clergy: and after the return of the ambaſſadors Philip took the croſs with the greateſt demonſtrations of piety. This example, which was followed by almoſt all the princes and barons of the kingdom, and a great number of prelates, ſet all Europe in motion. The kings of Bohemia, Arragon, and Navarre likewiſe took the croſs, and the king of France promiſed that twenty thouſand horſe and thirty thouſand foot ſhould paſs into the Eaſt, on board Venetian, Genoeſe and Piſan veſſels.

The family of the Colonnas were more zealous than any other for the ſucceſs of the holy war. In 1218 Cardinal John Colonna headed the cruſade, diſtinguiſhed

tinguiſhed himſelf by his great valour, and contributed to the taking of Damietta, though he was made priſoner by the Saracens; who condemned him to be ſawed aſunder, but at the moment of execution, ſurprized with the fortitude he diſcovered, they gave him his life and liberty.

THE ſecond project of tranſlating the holy ſee to Rome, was as important as the former, and more eaſy to be executed; but the death of the Pope, which happened in 1334, put an end to this deſign, and the troubles that agitated Europe put an end likewiſe to the other.

JOHN the XXII. had governed the church eighteen years: he was a man of underſtanding and knowledge; had prodigious activity, and great conſtancy in purſuing what he once undertook; and was poſſeſſed of an immenſe treaſure. But, notwithſtanding all theſe reſources, he could not bring to perfection any one of the projects

projects he aimed at, in the courſe of his long pontificate.

The firſt was the Cruſade; the ſecond the depoſition of the Emperor Lewis of Bavaria; the third the deſtruction of the Gibbelins in Italy, and of the Imperial authority, on the ruins of which he meant to eſtabliſh his own; and the fourth, though of a very different nature, was as vigorouſly purſued by him as the reſt.

John believed that the ſouls of the juſt would not enjoy the viſion of God, till after the univerſal judgment, and the reſurrection of their bodies. They are, ſaid he, while waiting for this judgment, under the altar and protection of the humanity of Jeſus Chriſt. Aſtoniſhed at the oppoſition made to this doctrine, he employed his authority to prove the truth of it, puniſhing with ſeverity thoſe who openly contradicted it. He put a Dominican into priſon on this account, and ci-

ted Durain de St. Pourcoin biſhop of Mieux, one of the greateſt theologiſts of his time, to appear and anſwer for his faith. Theſe acts of violence incenſed all the world againſt him. The inſurrection of the Cardinals, and a great part of the court of Rome; the deciſion of the doctors in theology at Paris, and the exhortation of the kings of France and Naples, obliged the Pope to make a ſolemn retraction of this doctrine before his death.

PETRARCH ſpeaking on this ſubject, ſays;

"BEATITUDE is a ſtate to which nothing can be added; it is conformable to nature, that the ſpirit ſhould be always in motion till there remains nothing for it to deſire. How then can the dead enjoy the viſion of God; in which conſiſts the bleſſedneſs of man, while they are deſiring with ardour the reunion of their bodies?"

IN

In a letter to Cardinal Colonna, ſome years after:

"Permit me, ſays he, to ſpeak freely of a Pope, of whom you were fond, though not of his errors. His doctrine concerning the viſion of God, however probable at the bottom, was condemned by the greateſt number, and thoſe of the beſt judgment; and lies buried with its author."

After the death of John, James Fournier was elected Pope to the aſtoniſhment of all the world; and this Cardinal himſelf, when they came to adore him, ſaid to thoſe around him, Your choice is fallen upon an aſs. If we may believe Petrarch he did himſelf juſtice, and the acknowledgement of his incapacity was the greateſt proof he ever gave of his judgment.

He was a baker's ſon, and took the name

name of Bennet the XII. His figure, his ſhape, his voice, his manners were entirely oppoſite to thoſe of his predeceſſor, whoſe doctrine concerning the viſion of God he publicly condemned. They looked upon him at the court of Avignon as a man of no conſequence, and incapable of governing the church.

1335. PETRARCH was at this time chaplain and official to Cardinal Colonna, but he had no living; the Pope gave him the canonry of Lombes, with the promiſe of the firſt vacant Prebend; and in his letter ſpeaks highly of the knowledge of Petrarch, and of the goodneſs of his life. It muſt be remarked here that this Pope left a great number of benefices unſupplied; not finding, he ſaid, any perſon capable of filling them.

THE troubles of Italy drew this year to Avignon Azon de Corege, a character that ſoon engaged the attention and friend-

friendſhip of Petrarch; at fifteen years of age he had entered into holy orders; but took up arms afterwards in defence of his country, and came to Avignon on a public negociation; he had the beſt conſtitution in the world, his ſtrength was aſtoniſhing, and his body hard as iron. He was called iron-foot, becauſe he was indefatigable. His mind was full of ardour, and eager after all kinds of knowledge; he read a great deal, and forgot nothing; he ſought earneſtly the ſociety of thoſe who could give him any inſtruction, and in the hurry of the greateſt affairs he always reſerved ſome hours to enrich his mind with ſtudy. It is eaſy to imagine that a man of this character would be deſirous of being admitted into the aſſembly of Cardinal Colonna, and would be well received there.

Azon de Corege had heard of Petrarch's reputation, and earneſtly deſired his acquaintance. As they were of the

ſame age and the ſame turn of mind, they ſoon entered into a very intimate friendſhip; and Petrarch was ſo happy as to have an opportunity of giving Azon a ſingular proof of his affection ſoon after his arrival at Avignon. The Correges were deeply engaged in the public quarrels of Italy. Azon at this time had it upon his hands, to defend the cauſe of the nobles of Verona, by whom he was ſent to Avignon; to aſſert the rights of his family which had been invaded; and to guard the ſafety of his own perſon which had been aſſaulted. Enchanted with the genius of Petrarch, and his irreſiſtible eloquence, he thought he could not confide his cauſe to an orator more able to defend it; and beſought Petrarch to be his advocate. Petrarch had never taken upon him the profeſſion of the law:

"My reputation, ſaid he, has never "been ſo blemiſhed as to conſtrain me "to defend it. My profeſſion does not "oblige

" oblige me to take up the vindication " of others. I love ſolitude; I deteſt " the bar; I deſpiſe money; and I could " never be prevailed upon to let out my " tongue for hire. It is repugnant to " my nature."

What Petrarch could not do from inclination or for intereſt, he did from friendſhip. He charged himſelf with the cauſe of Azon, and of the houſe of Corege. It was a very intereſting one, and opened a vaſt field for eloquence.

Petrarch, inſpired by friendſhip, diſplayed his oratory with ſucceſs, and which was ſtill more ſurpriſing with a temper fiery and paſſionate like his, he avoided with care thoſe digreſſions againſt the adverſe party, thoſe cutting ſallies of wit, which lawyers are ſo apt to run into, in order to ſhine themſelves, rather than to ſtrengthen their cauſe. Azon gained his ſuit. The Lords of Verona were

confirmed in the ſovereignty of Parma, and Petrarch convinced the Pope and the Cardinals who aſſiſted in this aſſembly, that he would have been the greateſt orator of his age, if he had not rather choſe to be the greateſt poet.

PETRARCH on this occaſion gained alſo another diſtinguiſhed friend, who was colleague with Azon in this affair; his name was William de Paſtrengo, born at Paſtrengo, a town a few leagues diſtant from Verona. He had ſtudied the law at Padua, under the celebrated Profeſſor Oldradi. Having found out the ſecret of reconciling this ſtudy with that of the Belles Lettres, he was an orator, a poet, and a civilian.

THE nobles of Verona had great confidence in Paſtrengo, and committed to him the moſt important negociations. We have at this day a book written by him, rare and little known, full of mat-

ter on all ſubjects, and which ſhews a great fund of erudition. It was printed at Venice: the firſt part is on ſacred and prophane hiſtory; the ſecond, an hiſtorical and geographical dictionary, which treats of the origin of things. He was, with all this learning, a man of gallantry, and well verſed in the methods of making himſelf agreeable in converſation. His love of the Belles Lettres united him with Petrarch in a very ſincere friendſhip.

The Biſhop of Lombes, whom family affairs retained at Rome, deſired extremely to ſee his dear Petrarch in that great city, and never ceaſed preſſing him in his letters to undertake the journey. It cannot be doubted that Petrarch wiſhed much to go; many objects attracted him; but he was prevented by his paſſion for Laura on one hand, and his attachment to the Cardinal on the other, who would not ſuffer him to leave Avignon. He excuſed himſelf on theſe ac-

counts to the Biſhop of Lombes, aſſuring him theſe were the only reaſons he did not comply with his tender and preſſing invitations. He adds in his letter to the Biſhop, who had wrote with pleaſantry on Laura:

"WOULD to God that my Laura was an imaginary perſon! and that my paſſion for her was only a jeſt! Alas! it is a phrenſy! We may counterfeit ſickneſs by voice and geſture, but we cannot give ourſelves the air and colour of a ſick perſon. How many times have you witneſſed the paleneſs of my countenance, and the agonies of my heart? I feel you ſpeak ironically; irony is your favourite figure; but I hope I ſhall be cured of my diſorder, and that time will cloſe up my wound."

HE adds:

"YOUR kind attentions flatter my ſelf-

ſelf-love! I do not know from whence the high ideas have been taken, which certain perſons have conceived of me. But this favourable prejudice has been my happy deſtiny from my cradle. I have been always more known than I deſired; many things bad and good have been ſaid of me; I was not elated by the one, or depreſſed by the other; for I have been long convinced, that the world is falſe and deceitful, and that my life is but a dream. I have been torn to pieces by the pleaſantries of my friends on my paſſion for Laura; to put balm into the wound, you exhort me to love you. Alas! you well know that in love I require a rein rather than a ſpur. I ſhould be more tranquil had I leſs ſenſibility."

This year, 1336, at the end of April, 1336. Petrarch, always curious and eager to ſee new objects, took a journey to Mount Ventoux. This is one of the higheſt mountains in Europe, and having few

hills near it ſo lofty as to intercept the proſpect, it preſents from its ſummit a more extenſive view than can be ſeen from the Alps or the Pyrennees. Petrarch gives this account of his journey in a letter to father Dennis:

"HAVING paſſed my youth in the province of Venaiſſon, I have always had a deſire to viſit a mountain which is deſcribed from all parts, and which is ſo properly called the mountain of the winds. I ſought a companion for this expedition; and, what will appear ſingular, among the number of friends that I had, I met with none quite ſuited to my mind: ſo true is it, that it is rare to find, even among perſons who love one another the beſt, a perfect conformity in taſte, inclination, and manner of thinking. One appeared to me too quick, another too ſlow; I found this man too lively, the other too dull; there is one, ſaid I to myſelf, too tender and too delicate

cate to ſuſtain the fatigue; there is another too fat and too heavy, he can never get up ſo high; in fine, this is too petulant and noiſy, the other too ſilent and melancholy. All theſe defects, which friendſhip can ſupport in a town and in a houſe, would be intolerable on a journey. I weighed this matter, and finding that thoſe whoſe ſociety would have pleaſed me, either had affairs which prevented them, or had not the ſame curioſity as myſelf, I would not put their complaiſance to the proof. I determined to take with me my brother Gerard, whom you know. He was very glad to accompany me, and felt a ſenſible joy in ſupplying the place of a friend as well as a brother."

"We went from Avignon to Malaucene, which is at the foot of the mountain on the North ſide, where we ſlept the night, and repoſed ourſelves the whole of the next day. The day after, my brother

brother and myſelf, followed by two domeſtics, aſcended the mountain with much trouble and fatigue, though the weather was mild and the day very fine. We had agility, ſtrength, and courage; nothing was wanting; but this maſs of rocks is of a ſteepneſs almoſt inacceſſible. Towards the middle of the mountain we found an old ſhepherd, who did all he could to divert us from our project. It is about fifty years ago, ſaid he, that I had the ſame humour with yourſelves; I climbed to the top of the mountain, and what did I get by it?—My body and my cloaths torn to pieces by the briars, much fatigue and repentance, with a firm reſolution never to go thither again. Since that time I have not heard it ſaid that any one has been guilty of the ſame folly."

"YOUNG people are not to be talked out of their ſchemes. The more the ſhepherd exaggerated the difficulties of

the enterpriſe, the ſtronger deſire we felt to conquer them. When he ſaw that what he ſaid had no effect, he ſhewed us a ſteep path along the rocks; that is the way you muſt go, ſaid he."

"After leaving our cloaths and all that could embarraſs us, we began to climb with inconceivable ardour. Our firſt efforts, which is not uncommon, were followed with extreme weakneſs: we found a rock, on which we reſted ſome time: after which we reſumed our march; but it was not with the ſame agility; mine ſlackened very much. While my brother followed a very ſteep path which appeared to lead to the top, I took another which was more upon the declivity. Where are you going? cried my brother with all his might; that is not the way, follow me. Let me alone, ſaid I, I prefer the path that is longeſt and eaſieſt. This was an excuſe for my weakneſs. I wandered for ſome time at the

I ſaid, It is near ten years, Petrarch, ſince thou haſt quitted Bologna: what a change in thy manners ſince that time! Not yet ſafe in port, I dare not view thoſe tempeſts of the mind with which I feel myſelf continually agitated. The time will perhaps come, when I may be able to ſay with St. Auguſtine; if I retrace my paſt errors, thoſe unhappy paſſions that overwhelmed me, it is not becauſe they are ſtill dear, it is becauſe I will devote myſelf to none but thee my God. But I have yet much to do. I love, but it is a melancholy love. My ſtate is deſperate. It is that which Ovid paints ſo ſtrongly in that well-known line;"

"I cannot hate, and I am forced to love!"

"If, ſaid I, thou ſhouldſt live ten years longer, and in that time make as much progreſs in virtue; wouldſt thou not be able to die with a more aſſured hope? Abandoned to theſe reflections, I deplored

deplored the imperfection of my conduct, and the inſtability of all things human."

"The ſun was now going to reſt, and I perceived that it would ſoon be time for me to deſcend the mountain. I then turned towards the Weſt, when I ſought in vain that long chain of mountains which ſeparates France and Spain."

"Nothing that I knew of hid them from my ſight, but nature has not given us organs capable of ſuch extenſive views. To the right I diſcovered the mountains of the Lyonnoiſe, and to the left the ſurges of the Mediterranean, which bathe Marſeilles on one ſide, on the other daſh themſelves in pieces againſt the rocky ſhore. I ſaw them very diſtinctly, though at the diſtance of ſeveral days journey."

"The Rhone glided under my eyes; the clouds were at my feet. Never was there

there a more extenſive variegated and inchanting proſpect! What I ſaw rendered me leſs incredulous of the accounts of Olympus, and mount Athos, which they aſſert to be higher than the region of the clouds from whence deſcend the ſhowers of rain."

"AFTER having ſatisfied my eyes for ſome time with thoſe delightful objects, which elevated my mind, and inſpired it with pious reflections; I took the book of St. Auguſtin's confeſſions which I had from you, and which I always carry about me. It is dear to me for its own value, and the hands from whence I received it, render it dearer ſtill; on opening it I accidentally fell on this paſſage in the tenth book: "Men go far to obſerve the ſummits of mountains, the waters of the ſea, the beginnings and the courſes of rivers, the immenſity of the ocean, *but they neglect themſelves.*"

"I TAKE

"I TAKE God and my brother to witneſs that what I ſay is true. I was ſtruck with the ſingularity of an accident, the application of which it was ſo eaſy for me to make."

"AFTER having ſhut the book, I recollected what happened to St. Auguſtin, and St. Anthony on the like occaſion, and believing I could not do better than imitate theſe great ſaints, I left off reading, and gave myſelf up to the croud of ideas which preſented themſelves, on the folly of mortals, who neglecting their moſt noble part, confuſe themſelves with vain objects, and go to ſeek that with difficulty abroad, which they might eaſily meet with at home. If, ſaid I, I have undergone ſo much labour and fatigue, that my body may be nearer heaven; what ought I not to do and to ſuffer, that my ſoul may come there alſo?"

"In the midſt of theſe contemplations I was got, without perceiving it, to the bottom of the hill, with the ſame ſafety, and leſs fatigue than I went up. A fine clear moon favoured our return. While they were preparing our ſupper, I ſhut myſelf up in a corner of the houſe, to give you this account, and the reflections it produced in my mind. You ſee, my father, that I hide nothing from you. I wiſh I was always able to tell you not only what I do, but even what I think. Pray to God that my thoughts, now alas! vain, and wandering, may be immoveably fixed on the only true and ſolid good."

PETRARCH often retired into the moſt deſart places; and if by accident he met with Laura in the ſtreets of Avignon, he avoided her, and paſſed ſwiftly to the other ſide. This affectation diſpleaſed her. Meeting him one day, ſhe looked at him with more kindneſs than uſual. Perhaps ſhe wiſhed to preſerve a lover

of

of ſuch reputation; or could not be inſenſible to the conſtancy of his affection. A favour ſo unhoped for from Laura, reſtored Petrarch to happineſs, and put an end to all his boaſted reſolution. When he paſſed a few days without ſeeing her, he felt an irreſiſtible deſire to ſee her in thoſe places ſhe frequented. She behaved to him with more eaſe; he wiſhed to aſſure her of his love by the moſt tender expreſſions, or at leaſt by his ſighs and tears; but the dignity of Laura's countenance and behaviour rendered him motionleſs: his ſenſes were ſuſpended, his tears dried up, and his words expired upon his lips. His eyes could alone expreſs the feelings of his ſoul. In a ſonnet he ſays:

"You could not without compaſſion
"behold the image of death ſtamped on my
"face; a kind regard, a word dictated by
"friendſhip has reſtored me to life. That
"I yet breathe is your precious gift. Diſ-

" poſe of me, for you are the reviver of " my ſoul; you alone, beautiful Laura, " poſſeſs both the keys to my heart."

THE Poets imagined their heart to have two doors, the one leading to pleaſure, the other to pain. It is to this poetic fiction that Petrarch alludes.

LAURA wiſhed to be beloved by Petrarch, but with ſuch refinement that he ſhould never ſpeak of his love. Whenever he attempted the moſt diſtant expreſſion of this kind, ſhe treated him with exceſſive rigour; but when ſhe ſaw him in deſpair, his countenance languiſhing, and his ſpirits drooping; ſhe then reanimated him by ſome trifling kindneſs; a look, a geſture, or a word, was ſufficient.

THIS mixture of ſeverity and compaſſion, ſo ſtrongly marked in the lines of Petrarch, is the key to a right judgment of Laura's character. It was thus ſhe

held for twenty years the affections of a man, the moſt ardent and impetuous, without the ſmalleſt ſtain to her honour; and this was the method ſhe thought beſt adapted to the temper and diſpoſition of Petrarch.

Whenever Laura had reaſon to complain of him, it was eaſy to perceive her diſpleaſure: her air was diſturbed, ſhe caſt down her eyes, turned away her head, and made haſte out of his ſight.

One day more courageous than uſual, Petrarch ventured to ſpeak of his love and conſtancy, notwithſtanding the rigour with which ſhe treated him, and reproved her for the manner in which ſhe behaved to the moſt faithful and diſcreet of lovers.

"As ſoon as I appear, you turn away "your eyes; you recline your head; and "your countenance is troubled. *Alas! I "perceive you ſuffer.* O Laura! Why

"thefe cruel manners? Could you tear "yourſelf from a heart where you have "taken ſuch deep root, I ſhould com- "mend your ſeverity. In a barren and "uncultivated ſoil the plant that lan- "guiſhes, requires a kinder ſun; but you "muſt for ever live in my heart. Since "then it is your deſtiny, render your ſi- "tuation leſs diſagreeable."

THERE are two ſtages of Petrarch's love: the one when Laura was in that age of innocence, in which there is no ſuſpicion; when ſhe treated him with politeneſs, and with kindneſs, becauſe ſhe ſaw nothing in his manner that oppoſed ſuch treatment. On his part he behaved with tenderneſs and eſteem, and ſhe enjoyed at eaſe the pleaſures of his converſation. The confidence with which this inſpired him, and the delight he felt in her preſence, encouraged him, though with a trembling voice, to expreſs his love. Laura replied with an agitated coun-

countenance, "I am not, Petrarch, I am not the perſon you ſuppoſe me." Petrarch was thunder-ſtruck, and could not open his mouth. Laura forbids him to appear before her; he writes to her to beſeech her pardon: ſhe is ſtill more offended, and avoids all occaſions of ſeeing him. Petrarch weeps and ſighs inceſſantly; and Laura deprives him of her ſociety for a long time; but on his falling ſick, permits him at laſt to ſee, and to ſpeak to her. He again hazards ſomething about his affection, and ſhe treats him with more ſeverity than ever. He becomes outrageous, and in deſpair calls death to his ſuccour, and goes wandering about in the moſt frightful and ſolitary deſarts: love follows him every where.

A PHILOSOPHICAL curioſity leads Petrarch to travel to France and Germany; but ſcarcely is he ſet out when he repents, and deſires to return. He feels that he cannot live without Laura. In

traverſing the foreſt of Ardenne, he believes her to be in every object he ſees, and in every echo he hears: when he is near Lyons, his tranſports are inexpreſſible at the ſight of the Rhone, becauſe that river waſhes the walls of the city where Laura reſides. When he arrives at Avignon, he finds her in the ſame diſpoſition he left her, as auſtere and intractable on the ſubject of love: and he complains that he could diſcover nothing in her eyes but anger and diſdain.

THIS was his firſt ſtate. He had yet never felt remorſe; on the contrary, the modeſty of Laura, her virtue, the innocence of her life, the graces of her converſation, had given him ſo high an idea of her, that he thought he could do nothing ſo honourable as to cultivate this love.

"WHAT a felicity is it for thee, he "would ſay to himſelf, to have dared thus "high

"high to raiſe thy vows of love. She has "kindled in thy heart a flame, that in diſ- "engaging thee from licentious pleaſures, "ſought by unthinking mortals, directs "thee to that ſovereign good, which is "the reward of virtue."

But when Petrarch returned from his journey, he began to feel ſome remorſe for aſcribing ſo much to any created being, though perfect as Laura herſelf. He reflected that his heart was formed for his Creator, and could never be happy till fixed on God. The exhortations of Father Dennis were probably the cauſe of this remorſe.

In his letters he ſays:

"How much time have you waſted on that Laura! How many uſeleſs ſteps have you taken in thoſe woods!"

But the ſmalleſt incident was ſufficient

ent to unhinge his philoſophy, and ſtagger every reſolution he had formed, to calm his mind. One day he obſerved a country girl waſhing the veil of Laura. A ſudden trembling ſeized him; and though the dog-ſtar raged, he ſhivered as in the depth of winter. Every other object was concentred in this paſſion. It was not poſſible for him to apply to ſtudy, or the conduct of his affairs. His ſoul was like a field of battle, where his heart and reaſon held continual engagements.

"IT was this, ſays he, that over-
"ſpread with the clouds of grief thoſe
"delightful years of life, which by nature
"ſeem conſecrated to joy and pleaſure."

AFTER contemplating his paſt and preſent ſtate:

"TEN years, ſays he, has grief prey-
"ed upon me; a ſlow poiſon conſumes my

" body; hardly have I ſtrength to drag
" along my weakened limbs. I muſt get
" out of this dreadful ſituation; I muſt
" recover my liberty."

He determined therefore again to travel, and try the effects of abſence. We have already mentioned the deſire he had to viſit Rome, and perform his promiſe to the Biſhop of Lombes. He had likewiſe a ſtrong temptation to go to Paris; having promiſed ſome friends he left there, he would ſoon return. At the head of theſe friends were father Dennis, and Robert de Bordi whom the Pope had juſt made Chancellor of the Church of Paris, with the Canonry of Notre Dame.

Robert de Bordi was deſcended from one of the richeſt and moſt conſiderable families in Florence. He came when very young to purſue his ſtudies at Paris, according to the cuſtom of the Florentines, who have great emulation. He made

made ſo rapid a progreſs, that the Doctors of this celebrated univerſity had a ſort of veneration for his genius. In truth he was a man of extraordinary merit, a great philoſopher, and a ſound divine. He appeared with diſtinction in the council of Vincennes, where the opinion of John the XXII. concerning the viſion of God was condemned. We are obliged to him for having preſerved to us the diſcourſes of St. Auguſtin, which would probably have been loſt if he had not taken the pains to collect them.

BEFORE we ſpeak of Petrarch's journey, which he at laſt determined ſhould be to Italy, we muſt inſert a circumſtance of reproach to his character. In the early part of his life he had a miſtreſs who behaved to him with leſs rigour than Laura; and by whom he had a ſon called John, and a daughter a few years after: they

they will both appear in the courſe of theſe memoirs.

After having obtained with difficulty the permiſſion of Cardinal Colonna, and taken leave of his friends, Petrarch ſet out from Avignon in the beginning of December, 1336, to go to Marſeilles, where he embarked in a ſhip which was juſt ſetting ſail to Civita-Vecchia. He concealed his name, and gave himſelf out for a pilgrim going to worſhip at Rome. Who can expreſs the joy he felt, when from the deck he could diſcover the coaſt of Italy! that dear country after which he had ſo long ſighed! When he was landed, he perceived a laurel tree: in his firſt emotion he ran towards it; and too much beſide himſelf to obſerve his ſteps, he fell into a brook, which he muſt croſs to arrive at the wiſhed for object. This fall cauſed him to ſwoon. Always occupied with Laura, he ſays:

"On

" On thoſe ſhores waſhed by the " Tyrrhene ſea, I beheld that ſtately laurel " which always warms my imagination. " Love impelled me towards it. I flew, " and through my impatience fell breath- " leſs in the intervening ſtream. I was " alone and in the woods, yet I bluſhed at " my heedleſſneſs; for to the reflecting " mind, no witneſs is requiſite to excite " the emotions of ſhame."

It was not eaſy for Petrarch to paſs from the coaſt of Tuſcany to Rome; for the war between the Urſins and the Colonnas, which was renewed with more fury than ever, filled all the ſurrounding places with armed men. As he had no eſcort, he went to the caſtle of Capranica, at ten leagues diſtance from Rome. He was well received by Orſo count of Anguillora, who had eſpouſed Agnes Colonna, ſiſter of the Cardinal and of the Biſhop. He was a man of underſtanding, and fond of letters. The deſcription

ſcription of this caſtle and its environs, is contained in the following letter of Petrarch's to Cardinal Colonna.

"CAPRANICA is the very ſituation I could wiſh for; conſumed as I am by anxiety. It was formerly an uncultivated place, full of thickets and wild trees, where the goats came to browſe, and from whence it took its name. The beauty of the ſituation and the natural fertility of the ſoil, drew men by degrees to ſettle there. They built a fortreſs on the moſt elevated part, and as many houſes as the compaſs of a narrow hill could admit. From the top of this hill they diſcover Mount Soracte, celebrated in this line of Horace:

"See how Soracte ſtands, white with deep ſnows."

The lake Cimitus of which Virgil ſpeaks, and Sutri a town of Ceres, are but two thouſand paces diſtant. The air of Capranica

pranica is very clear. Around it are a great number of little hills, which are not difficult of acceſs; ſeveral ſpacious caverns; and to the South, a thick wood which is a ſhelter from the burning heats of noon. The hill reclines on the North ſide, and diſcovers fields in full bloom, where the bees delight to dwell. Several fountains of ſweet water glide along the valleys; and in the wood and on the hills, deer, ſtags, kids, and all ſorts of tame cattle are ſeen to wander and graze. Birds of all kinds are heard to ſing, and in general all things are found here which belong to the fineſt and moſt cultivated countries, without reckoning the lakes, the rivers, and a neighbouring ſea, which are among the richeſt preſents of nature."

"PEACE was the only thing which I could not meet with in this delightful ſituation. I know not whether fate or ſome crime of the nation has drawn on them the ſcourge of war. The ſhepherd, inſtead

inſtead of guarding againſt the wolves, goes armed into the woods to defend himſelf from the enemy. The labourer in a coat of mail, uſes a lance inſtead of a goad to drive along his cattle. The fowler draws his nets, covered with a ſhield. The fiſherman carries a ſword, inſtead of a line to hook his fiſh. And what is ſtill more extraordinary, the native draws water from the wells in an old ruſty helmet, inſtead of a pail. In a word, arms here are uſed as tools and implements for all the labours of the field, and all the wants of men. In the night are heard dreadful howlings round the walls; in the day, terrible voices which cry out without ceaſing, To arms! to arms! What muſic, compared with thoſe ſoft and harmonious ſounds that I drew from my lute at Avignon! This country is the image of hell; it breathes nothing but hatred, war, and carnage."

"From this picture, who could be-

lieve that Capranica was the reſidence of the mildeſt and moſt amiable of men? Orſo count of Anquillora, tranquil in the midſt of this confuſion, lives with his wife in the happieſt union, gives the moſt obliging reception to his gueſts, governs his vaſſals with a ſtrictneſs tempered with love, cultivates the Muſes, and ſeeks the ſociety of men of learning. Agnes Colonna his wife, is one of thoſe women who can only be praiſed by a ſilent admiration, ſo much does ſhe riſe above all that can be ſaid to her honour."

"THESE charming hoſts make that place delightful, which would elſe be terrible from the horrors of war. Though I greatly deſire the ſight of Rome, and the friends I know there, I feel not that inquietude men experience as they approach nearer the object of their deſires. I am as tranquil in this houſe as I could be even in the temple of peace herſelf. And as we accuſtom ourſelves inſenſibly

to

to all things, I walk without arms and without dread on thoſe hills, which are the ſcenes of war. I hear them ſound the charge; I ſee armed troops engage with one another; the claſhing of ſwords and the cries of the combatants, do not prevent my meditating as in my cloſet, and labouring to amuſe poſterity."

When Petrarch was arrived at Capranica, he diſpatched a courier to the Biſhop of Lombes to inform him where he was, and that he knew no method of getting to him in the midſt of ſo many dangers; all the roads which led to Rome being occupied by the enemy. The Biſhop expreſſed great joy on hearing of his arrival, and ordered him to wait his coming.

This Prelate came to Capranica with Stephen Colonna his brother, Senator of Rome. They had with them only a troop of a hundred horſe, and as the

enemy kept poſſeſſion of the country with more than five hundred, it was wonderful they met with no difficulty on their rout; but the name and reputation of the Colonnas had ſpread the alarm in the enemy's camp, and by this means made their way free and ſafe.

WHAT a joy was it for the Biſhop of Lombes to ſee that friend again whom he ſo tenderly loved! whoſe works he read with pleaſure! and whoſe converſation had a thouſand charms! The Senator was likewiſe delighted to ſee Petrarch, whoſe reputation had already ſpread far and wide. It is impoſſible to expreſs Petrarch's joy on beholding the Prelate who was ſo dear to him, and the Hero for the ſight of whom he had ſo impatiently longed. They departed all together from Capranica with their little eſcort, and arrived at Rome without any ſkirmiſh, notwithſtanding the meaſures taken by their enemies to intercept them.

Stephen Colonna in quality of Senator reſided in the capitol, where he lodged Petrarch; who could not contain his tranſports to find himſelf in a place which had been the theatre of thoſe great events, always preſent in his mind. 1337.

It is much to be regretted that the letters which Petrarch wrote from Rome to Cardinal Colonna are loſt. There remains only a fragment of one dated from the capitol as follows:

"After having read the long account I gave you of Capranica, what will you not expect of me concerning Rome? The ſubject is inexhauſtible. I am ſtruck with the wonders I every where behold. Their variety confounds me, and I know not where to begin. I recall to mind, what you ſaid to me one day at Avignon: Petrarch, do not go to Rome: That city will not anſwer the idea you have conceived of it; you will find nothing

but ruins. Theſe words impreſſed my mind, and cooled my ardour. I had experienced that great objects are often diminiſhed by their preſence; but here I found it otherwiſe. My ideas of Rome are enlarged, not diminiſhed; its ruins have ſomething grand and majeſtic, which impreſs me with veneration. And far from being ſurpriſed, that Rome ſhould have ſubdued the world, I rather wonder that the conqueſt was not earlier accompliſhed."

PETRARCH was received and treated in the houſe of the Colonnas, as one of the family; and they contended which ſhould ſhow him the moſt friendſhip. Old Colonna, who knew him at Avignon, loaded him with favours, and with eagerneſs pointed out to him, all the curioſities in Rome. But of all the family, Jean de St. Vit the brother of Stephen Colonna, was the moſt happy in Petrarch. This old man, who had been exiled

from Avignon by his enemies, found more charms than ever in his wit and converſation, and was uſeful to him in his reſearches after Roman antiquities; about which our poet was very inquiſitive. Jean de St. Vit had made them his ſtudy from his childhood, and was perhaps the only Roman of that time well acquainted with them, if we except Nicholas Rienzi, of whom I ſhall ſoon ſpeak.

Nothing appeared more aſtoniſhing to Petrarch, than the indifference of the Romans to theſe precious remains of antiquity. They had them continually before their eyes, but vouchſafed them not the leaſt obſervation. "The magnificence of Rome, ſays he, and all that can heighten its glory, are no where leſs known than at Rome."

Jean de St. Vit took him every day to walk within and around this great city.

It had a waſte and deſolate appearance, though it contained a vaſt number of inhabitants. They took ſcarcely a ſtep without finding ſomething to excite their admiration, and furniſh them with a ſubject of diſcourſe. At the end of their walk, they generally ſat down to reſt themſelves, on the Baths of Dioclefian, ſome veſtiges of which are ſtill remaining. Sometimes they went upon the roof of this fine monument, where there was a clear air, a very extenſive view, and no one to interrupt them.

ROME was at this time in a deplorable ſituation. The Colonnas at war with the Urſins, could not re-eſtabliſh the peace of the city, or reſtore its ancient luſtre. It was continually a prey to the evils of war. Nothing was to be ſeen in the ſtreets, but ruins: the churches falling to pieces; the altars ſpoiled of their ornaments. The prieſts were interrupted in the performance of their offices. Strangers could

could not reſort thither; for the highways were infeſted with robbers, to whom the city, and even the churches, ſerved for a retreat. Nothing was heard of but rapes, murders, adulteries, and aſſaſſinations. Audaciouſneſs reigned; juſtice was dumb; indulgence rendered the guilty more preſumptuous; and the nobles divided among themſelves, only agreed in oppreſſing the people. If Petrarch was touched to obſerve the wretched ſtate of Rome, and the decay of its ancient monuments, he was repaid by viewing the amiable and diſtinguiſhed behaviour of the Roman ladies.

"It is with reaſon, ſays he, that they are renowned above their ſex; for they have the tenderneſs and modeſty of women, with the courage and conſtancy of men." In the two ſiſters of Cardinal Colonna, he aſſures us were united the virtues and good qualities of the Greek and Roman heroines. As to the men, they are, ſays he, a good

good ſort of people, and affable when treated with civility; but they can bear no raillery in one particular, I mean that which reſpects the honour of their wives. Far from being as tractable as the Avignons, who ſuffer their wives to be taken from them without the leaſt murmur, the Romans have always this ſentence in their mouths: "ſmite us where you will, ſo we may but preſerve the honour of our wives."

"THE Romans, adds Petrarch, are not greedy of gain. I was aſtoniſhed, in ſo great a city, to find ſo few merchants and uſurers." A very different repreſentation of them, from one given in the twelfth century. "Beware of the Romans, ſays St. Bernard; they are ſeditious, jealous of their neighbours, and cruel towards ſtrangers. They love no body, and no body loves them." Their manners muſt have undergone a great change in the ſpace of two centuries,

ries, or Petrarch muſt have been ſtrangely partial to them. Hildebert, Archbiſhop of Tours, ſpeaking of them in the ſame century, ſays: "Rome would be happy if it had no lords, or if its nobles were honeſt men."

Notwithstanding all the endeavours of the Biſhop of Lombes, he could not terminate the quarrel between the Urſins and his family. This was the principal object of his long reſidence at Rome. He was diſpleaſed, that his father had engaged in a war, which might have ſuch fatal conſequences. And he took the liberty one day to ſpeak with freedom, and ſome ſeverity, on this ſubject. Old Stephen, who, notwithſtanding his great age, had yet much fire remaining, was hurt by theſe repreſentations. He could not forgive the Biſhop, and would not admit him into his preſence. Petrarch uſed the ſtrongeſt ſolicitations, to engage him to renew his uſual kindneſs

to

to his ſon; and at laſt was ſo happy as to ſucceed.

In a converſation with the venerable old man ſoon after this union, there happened a ſingular prediction, which Petrarch refers to afterwards in a letter to Stephen Colonna.

"Call to mind, ſays he, that walking together one evening in the ſtreet which leads from your palace to the capital, we ſtopped; and leaning on an old marble monument, fronting the ſtreet that goes from the hills to the Tiber, we converſed on the ſtate of your family. I had juſt obtained a favour from you, which you had refuſed to all your relations. It was to pardon the freedom of a ſon, againſt whom you had conceived a violent diſpleaſure.

"My ſon is your friend, ſaid you, but he has not reſpected my age. You would have

have me pardon and reſtore him to my love; I can refuſe you nothing; I will paſs it entirely over, but I take this occaſion to juſtify myſelf. They pretend, that contrary to what beſeems my age, I have engaged in a war which will deſcend to my family after my death; an inheritance of hatreds, quarrels and dangers, with which it will be always agitated. I take God to witneſs, that it was only with a view to peace I entered into war. The weakneſs of age, a certain degree of inſenſibility which is ſpread over my ſoul and all my ſenſes, and above all long experience, have given me a love of repoſe, and make me ſigh for tranquillity. But I refuſe no difficulties when they are neceſſary, and would rather confront death in battle, than drag out a ſhameful old age in ſlavery. As to what regards my inheritance, alas! ſaid you, looking earneſtly at me, your eyes bathed in tears, I would and I ought to leave one to my children, but the fates have

ordered

ordered it otherwiſe, by the overthrow of order, and the reign of confuſion. It is myſelf—it is the decrepid old man before you, who will be the heir of all his children. At theſe words, grief bound up your heart, and you could proceed no further."

"I AM not ignorant, ſays Petrarch, that God permits princes ſometimes to foreſee what will happen to their children: witneſs the emperor Veſpaſian, and many others. Nevertheleſs, I gave little attention at that time to this prediction; but when it was verified, I recollected and mentioned it to my friends."

IT is not certain, how long Petrarch continued at Rome, probably his ſtay was but ſhort. It appears from a Latin epiſtle of his to the Biſhop of Lombes, that his rout was towards the Weſt, and that he paſſed the Pyrennean mountains. I doubt not, he went to take poſſeſſion of his

his Canonry at Lombes, which the Pope had given him, with the expectation of the firſt vacant Prebend. He ſays in the ſame epiſtle, that he travelled along the coaſt of Spain by Cadiz, and from thence to the ſhores of the Britiſh ſea. The true motive of theſe journeys was, probably, the diſguſt and wearineſs of life which he felt in the city of Avignon, and that love of liberty which would have carried him to the extremities of the earth.

"One of the moſt diſagreeable things, ſays he, in the courſe of my journey was, that when I went from my own habitation, I met with none who ſpoke Latin; and when I came home again, I had not my books, my conſtant companions, ſo that I was obliged to have recourſe to my memory for amuſement."

All the journeys of Petrarch only ſerved to increaſe the idea he had always formed

formed of the ſuperiority of Italy, over France, England, Germany, and all the reſt of the world. In another letter to a friend, he explains himſelf more particularly.

"FORMERLY, ſays Petrarch, France poſſeſſed neither the gifts of Bacchus, nor thoſe of Minerva. It is to Rome they owe the wine and the oil they gather. But the olive tree is ſtill ſcarce in this kingdom, and they do not cultivate thoſe golden fruits which ſcatter ſo delightful a perfume. Their ſheep yield not ſo fine a wool. The ſtubborn ſoil opens not its boſom to give out the treaſures it contains. It ſends not forth its ſalutary waters, which, running from the minerals, nature has placed as the remedy for the greateſt part of our diſeaſes."

"IN England, they drink nothing but beer and cyder. The beverage of Flanders, is metheglin. As wine cannot be tran-

tranſported but at a great price, few people can afford to drink it."

"I SHALL not ſpeak of thoſe frozen climates, which are watered by the Danube, the Bog, and the Tanais. They know neither Bacchus nor Minerva, and are little favoured by Ceres. Nature ſeems to have acted the part of a ſtep-mother to all theſe countries. She has refuſed ſomething to every one of them. To ſome ſhe has given no foreſts: they can only warm themſelves with turf. Others are full of marſhes, which exhaling corrupted vapours, the inhabitants have no water fit to drink. Some there are, where the land covered with a barren ſand, with heath and buſhes, produces nothing uſeful: and others, which tigers, leopards, lions, and ſerpents render almoſt uninhabitable. Italy is the only country that nature has treated like a mother. She has given to it univerſal empire, talents, arts, all the advantages

of genius; and above all, that lyre which cauſed the Latins to triumph over the Greeks. In a word, it wants nothing but peace."

PETRARCH aſſures us, that exerciſe and abſence had produced a happy effect upon his mind, that his ſoul became tranquil, and he was no longer agitated with thoſe inward conflicts which deſtroyed his health and his peace. "The idea of Laura, ſays he, leſs frequently preſents itſelf, and when it does, it has leſs power." Inſtead of paſſing whole nights in tears, he ſlept quietly, he was gay, every thing amuſed him. He thought he was cured, and ſmiled at the follies of love.

PETRARCH returned to Avignon in Auguſt, 1337. No ſooner did he arrive, than he ſaw Laura; no ſooner had he ſeen her, than his wound ſo newly cloſed,

burſt

burſt open again; and his paſſion ſeized him with more violence than ever.

"I DESIRED death, ſays he. I was "even tempted to ſeek it in the violence "of my anguiſh. As a pilot at ſea, dreads "the rock on which he has been caſt, ſo "did I dread the meeting with Laura. "She was ſick; but the near approach of "death had not diminiſhed the luſtre of "her eyes. I trembled at her ſhadow. "The ſound of her voice deprived me of "motion."

IN this dreadful ſtate, Petrarch ſaw he had no other reſource, but flight. He determined to leave the city of Avignon, which in other reſpects alſo was inſupportable to him. He aſſures us, the manners of its inhabitants, and the corruption of the court of Rome, were the true motives of his departure: perhaps alſo a ſecret chagrin that he was not advanced to a ſuperior poſt, while many

worthleſs perſons were raiſed to the higheſt dignities.

"To obtain ſuch advantages, ſays Petrarch, it is neceſſary to frequent the palaces of the great, to flatter, promiſe, lie, diſſemble and deceive: qualities to which I was a ſtranger. I have no averſion to honours, but to the methods of gaining them."

He ſpeaks in the ſame manner of riches. It is probable alſo that the deſire of fame in the purſuit of letters, as well as his ſufferings from love, induced him to leave Avignon.

Having determined this matter, he could think of no ſituation ſo favourable to theſe views as Vaucluſe: that delightful ſolitude, which he went to ſee when a ſchool-boy at Carpentras, and which made at that age ſo lively an impreſſion upon his mind. Petrarch tells us, he ſometimes

ſometimes went there to moderate the ardour of his mind, by a view of the cool waters of that marvellous fountain, and the delightful ſhades of the woods with which it was ſurrounded. Reſolving to fix his reſidence there, he bought a little cottage with a ſmall field adjoining, and went with no other companions than his books.

Vaucluse is one of thoſe places, in which nature delights to appear under a form the moſt ſingular and romantic. Towards the coaſt of the Mediterranean, and on a plain beautiful as the vale of Tempe, you diſcover a little valley, encloſed by a barrier of rocks in the form of a horſe-ſhoe. The rocks are high, bold, and groteſque: and the valley is divided by a river, along the banks of which are extended meadows and paſtures of a perpetual verdure. A path, which is on the left ſide of the river, leads in gentle windings to the head of

this vaſt amphitheatre. There, at the foot of an enormous rock, and directly in front, you behold a prodigious cavern hollowed by the hand of nature: and in this cavern ariſes a ſpring, as celebrated almoſt as that of Helicon.

When the waters of the fountain are low, you may enter the cavern: the gloom of which is tremendous. It is a double cavern. The opening into the exterior, is an arch ſixty feet high; that of the interior, thirty. Near the middle of the cavern, you ſee an oval baſon, the longeſt diameter of which is one hundred and eight feet; and into this baſon, without jet or bubble, riſes that copious ſtream, which forms the river Sorgia. There is a common report that this fountain has never been fathomed. May not this proceed from the water's iſſuing with great impetuoſity at the bottom, and thus forcing back the lead and line? However this may be, you ſee nothing

nothing but an expanſe of water, ſmooth and tranquil.

The ſurface of the fountain is black. This appearance is produced by the depth of the ſpring; the colour of the rocks, and the obſcurity of the cavern: for in reality, nothing can be more perfectly clear and limpid, than the water of this ſpring. It ſtains not the rocks over which it paſſes, nor does it produce either weeds or mud. But what is very extraordinary, though ſo beautiful to the eye, it is harſh to the taſte, crude, heavy, and difficult to digeſt. It is excellent however for tanning and dying; and is ſaid to promote the growth of a plant, which fattens oxen and hatches chickens. Strabo, and Pliny the naturaliſt, ſpeak of this peculiarity.

In the ordinary ſtate of the fountain, the water falls away through ſome cavities under the rocks, and afterwards re-

turns to the day, and commences its courſe as a river. But during the ſwell about the Spring Equinox, and ſometimes alſo after heavy rains, there is an aſtoniſhing accumulation. The waters roll on with a lofty head to the opening of the cavern, and are precipitated and daſhed along the rocks with the noiſe of thunder. The tumult however ſoon ceaſes; the waters are peaceably received into a deep and commodious channel, and form a moſt delightful river, navigable to its very ſource. This river is in its progreſs divided into various branches, waters many parts of Provence, receives ſeveral other ſtreams, reunites its branches, and falls into the Rhone near Avignon.

PETRARCH thus beautifully moraliſes on this uncommon ſubject:

"SENECA obſerves, that *the ſources of great rivers inſpire us with a kind of veneration.* And that, *where a river burſts out*

out at once, altars ſhould be erected. And I call Heaven to witneſs, adds he, it is my firm reſolution to dedicate one to the fountain of Vaucluſe, as ſoon as my ſcattered faculties are a little collected. This altar ſhall be raiſed in the garden which hangs over the fountain. It ſhall not however be dedicated like thoſe of Seneca, to the gods of the rivers, or the nymphs of the fountains, but to the Virgin Mother of that God, who has deſtroyed the altars, and demoliſhed the temples of all other gods."

Such was the language of Petrarch ten years after his firſt retirement to Vaucluſe. But it was not the language of a heart, as yet freed from the charms of love. The hiſtory of his mind during this ſolitude is beſt collected from his own works.

In one of his letters written about this time, he ſays:

"Here

"HERE I make war upon my ſenſes, and treat them as my enemies. My eyes, which have drawn me into a thouſand difficulties, ſee no longer either gold or precious ſtones, or ivory or purple; they behold nothing, ſave the firmament, the water, and the rocks. The only female who comes within their ſight, is a ſwarthy old woman, dry and parched as the Lybian deſarts. My ears are no longer courted by thoſe harmonies of inſtruments or voices which have often tranſported my ſoul: they hear nothing but the lowing of cattle, the bleating of ſheep, the warbling of birds, and the murmurs of the ſtream."

"I KEEP ſilence from morn to night. There is no one to converſe with; for people conſtantly employed, either in ſpreading their nets, or taking care of their vines and orchards, have no knowledge of the intercourſes of the world, or the converſations of ſociety. I often

content

content myſelf with the brown bread of my old fiſherman, and even eat it with pleaſure; and when I am ſerved with white, I almoſt always return it."

"This old fiſherman, who is hard as iron, earneſtly remonſtrates againſt my manner of life; ſays it is too hardy, and aſſures me I cannot long hold out. I am on the contrary convinced, that it is more eaſy to accuſtom one's ſelf to a plain diet, than to the luxuries of a feaſt. Figs, raiſins, nuts, and almonds, theſe are my delicacies. I am fond of the fiſh with which this river abounds; it is an entertainment to ſee them caught, and I ſometimes employ myſelf in ſpreading the nets. As to my dreſs, here is an entire change; you would take me for a labourer or a ſhepherd."

"My manſion reſembles that of Cato, or Fabricius: my whole houſehold conſiſts of a dog, and my old fiſherman.

His cottage is contiguous to mine; when I want him, I call; when I no longer ſtand in need of him, he returns to his cottage. I have made myſelf two gardens, which pleaſe me marvellouſly; I do not think they are to be equalled in all the world. And muſt I confeſs to you a more than female weakneſs, with which I am haunted? I am poſitively angry, that there is any thing ſo beautiful out of Italy. They are my Tranſalpine Parnaſſus."

"ONE of theſe gardens is ſhady, formed for contemplation, and ſacred to Apollo. It hangs over the ſource of the river, and is terminated by rocks, or places acceſſible only to birds. The other is nearer my cottage, of an aſpect leſs ſevere, and devoted to Bacchus; and what is extremely ſingular, it is in the middle of a rapid river. The approach to it is over a ridge of rocks which communicates with the garden; and there is a na-

a natural grotto under the rock, which gives it the appearance of a ruſtic bridge. Into this grotto, the rays of the ſun never penetrate. I am confident it much reſembles the place, where Cicero ſometimes went to declaim. It invites to ſtudy.

"HITHER I retreat during the noontide hours: my mornings are engaged upon the hills; and my evenings, either in the meadows or in the garden ſacred to Apollo. It is ſmall, but moſt happily ſuited to rouſe the moſt ſluggiſh ſpirit, and elevate it to the ſkies. Here would I moſt willingly paſs my days, was I not too near Avignon, and too far from Italy. For why ſhould I conceal this weakneſs of my ſoul! I love Italy, and I hate Avignon. The peſtilential influence of this horrid place, empoiſons the pure air of Vaucluſe, and will compel me to quit my retirement."

To

To another friend he writes this eloquent invitation:

"HERE is no tyrant to intimidate, no proud citizen to inſult, no wicked tongue to calumniate. Neither quarrels, clamours, law-ſuits, nor the din of war. We are ſtrangers to avarice, ambition, and envy; and have no great lords to whom court muſt be paid. Every thing breathes joy, freedom, and ſimplicity. Our lot is neither that of poverty nor riches; but a ſweet, modeſt, and ſober ruſticity. The inhabitants are innocent, tractable, and unacquainted with arms. Our Chief, good, affable, and a lover of honeſt folks. The air healthy, the winds ſoft, the country open, the ſprings pure, and the river full of fiſh. We have ſhady woods, cool grottos, green lawns, ennamelled paſtures, and hills ſacred to Bacchus and Minerva."

"As to what reſpects the mere body, no one takes leſs trouble about it than myſelf. But I can tell you in one word, that every thing that liveth upon the earth, or that moveth in the waters, is here, as in the terreſtrial paradiſe, to ſpeak in the language of the divines; or as in the fields of Elyſium, to ſpeak in that of the poets. A voluptuary, who was in ſearch of the greateſt dainties, would be eaſily accommodated in this neighbourhood."

In another letter to a friend, we have a picture in a very different ſtyle:

"Oft in the midſt of ſummer, when I had ended my midnight prayers, and the moon ſhone bright, have I been irreſiſtibly impelled to wander over the fields, or aſcend the hills. Oft, at this ſilent hour, have I walked alone into the cavern, where no one even in the day and in company can enter without emotion.

emotion. I feel a kind of pleaſure in doing this; but it is a pleaſure mixed with horror."

PETRARCH retired to this delightful ſpot, to cure himſelf of his paſſion, and indulge his taſte for letters; but in vain.

"I MAY hide myſelf, ſays he, among the rocks, and in the woods, but there are no places ſo wild or ſolitary whither the torments of love do not purſue me."

"THRICE, in that dark and lonely "hour when nought but ghaſtly ſhades "is ſeen or heard, Laura with ſtedfaſt "look approached my bed, and claimed "her ſlave. My limbs were froze with "fear; my blood fled from my veins, and "ruſhed upon my heart. Trembling I "roſe ere morn; and left a houſe where "all I ſaw alarmed me. I climbed the "rocks; I ran into the woods; watch-"ing with fearful eyes this dreadful

" viſion; I may not be believed, but ſtill it
" followed;—here I perceived it ſtarting
" from a tree—there riſing from a fountain
" —now it deſcended from the rocks,
" or floated on the clouds. Surrounded
" thus, I ſtood transfixed with horror!"

PETRARCH paſſed near a year in this retreat: the domeſtics who ſerved him at Avignon deſired their diſmiſſion, for they could not bear to lead ſuch recluſe lives. 1338.

HE gives this character of his fiſherman, who was his domeſtic at Vaucluſe.

" HE is, ſays he, an aquatic animal, brought up among fountains, and rivers, and ſeeking his livelihood in the rocks; but a very good man, merry, docile, and obedient. To ſay ſimply, that he was faithful, would be too little; for he was fidelity itſelf. He underſtood agri-

culture, and every thing relative to a country life. It was a maxim with him, that whatever was ſown the eighth of the ides of February, in the ſoil of Vaucluſe, could not fail of being fruitful."

He had a wife, of whom Petrarch has given this deſcription in a letter to one of his friends.

"Her face is ſo withered, ſo ſcorched by the ſun, that was you to ſee her, you would think you beheld the deſarts of Lybia or Ethiopia. If Helen, Lucretia, or Virginia, had poſſeſſed faces like her's, Troy would have exiſted ſtill; Tarquin would not have been driven from his kingdom; nor Appius have died in priſon. But though the face of my farmer's wife is black, nothing can be whiter than her ſoul. She does not feel the want of beauty; and to look on her one would even ſay, it became her to be ugly.

No

No creature was ever ſo faithful, humble and laborious."

"At the ſeaſon when the graſhoppers can ſcarcely ſupport the heat of the ſun, ſhe paſſes her life in the fields; her hardy ſkin defies even the fury of the dog-days. At night, when ſhe returns, ſhe works in her houſe like a young perſon juſt riſen from ſleep. Never any complaints, never the leaſt murmur, nothing that ſhows the ſmalleſt variation of temper eſcapes her. She lies on a bed of leaves; all her food is a black gritty bread; her drink a ſharp wine, which taſtes like vinegar, and with which ſhe mixes a great deal of water. If any one preſents her with more delicate food ſhe rejects it, becauſe it is not what ſhe has been accuſtomed to."

Petrarch had hired this houſe from a peaſant; it was an uncomfortable dwelling, but he rebuilt it, in the moſt ſim-

ple manner. His beſt friends came ſeldom to ſee him; and when they did, made but a ſhort ſtay. Others went only from the mere principle of charity, and as we ſhould go to ſee ſick people or priſoners. Gui Settimo himſelf, that companion, that faithful friend, who had never left him from his childhood, had not the courage to follow him into this ſolitude. He was in the buſtle of the world, and ſoliciting a place at court, was called to the bar. But when he could ſteal a few moments from the hurry of buſineſs, he went to paſs them in this retreat with his friend, and ſaid with him, "This is a port, where I came to ſhelter myſelf from the tempeſts of the world."

THE other friends of Petrarch wrote to him ſometimes, to excuſe themſelves for not ſeeing him more frequently.

"IT is not poſſible to live as you do, ſaid they to him. The life you lead is contrary

contrary to nature. In the winter, you ſit like an owl in the corner of your chimney. In the ſummer you roam about the fields without ceaſing; or if by chance you are found, it is repoſing yourſelf under the ſhade of a tree."

"These friends of mine, ſays Petrarch, regard the pleaſures of the world as the ſupreme good; they do not comprehend that it is poſſible to renounce theſe pleaſures. They are ignorant of my reſources. I have friends whoſe ſociety is delightful to me; they are perſons of all countries, and of all ages; diſtinguiſhed in war, in council, and in letters. Eaſy to live with, always at my command. They come at my call, and return when I deſire them: they are never out of humour, and they anſwer all my queſtions with readineſs. Some preſent in review before me the events of paſt ages; others reveal to me the ſecrets of nature; theſe teach me how to live, and thoſe how to

die: theſe diſpel my melancholy by their mirth, and amuſe me by their ſallies of wit; and ſome there are, who prepare my ſoul to ſuffer every thing, to deſire nothing, and to become thoroughly acquainted with itſelf. In a word they open a door to all the arts and ſciences. As a reward of ſuch great ſervices, they require only a corner of my little houſe, where they may be ſafely ſheltered from the depredations of their enemies. In fine, I carry them with me into the fields, the ſilence of which ſuits them better than the buſineſs and tumults of cities."

THE village of Vaucluſe is in the dioceſe of Cavaillon, and is ſubject to it in ſpirituals and temporals; the biſhop is ſovereign. Cavaillon is a little neat town, delightfully ſituated at the foot of a mountain near Durance, four leagues from Avignon, and two from the fountain of Vaucluſe. Petrarch gives this account of it:

"THIS

"This town is neither large, well peopled, nor well built. It has only name, and antiquity; it is ſpoken of as an ancient city, in ſome authentic memoirs about fifty years before Chriſt, at the time that Julius Cæſar conquered Britain. It was formerly built on the mountain, and was a Roman colony, as appears from the medals of Lepidus. My friend Socrates ſaid pleaſantly enough, that it was like the little town, which according to ſome writers, king Agbarus offered to Jeſus Chriſt. This biſhoprick reſembles its poſſeſſor; it is equal to the greateſt in dignity, and enjoys the freedom of the leaſt."

"Philip of Cabaſſole has poſſeſſed it three years: he was of an ancient and noble family, divided into two branches; one of them reſided at Avignon, the other at Cavaillon; he was of the ſecond branch, and not arrived at the age preſcribed by the canons when he was made biſhop. One of his brothers call-

ed John Elzeor, was at that time ſent from the king of Naples to the court of the Pope. This family have always been attached to the houſe of Anjou, which has loaded them with benefits. Philip received his education at Cavaillon, the place of his birth; he was made canon before he was twelve years old, thirteen years after arch-deacon, and provoſt the year following. Three years after he had the biſhoprick, vacant by the death of Goufridi, who had been apothecary, phyſician, and favourite of John XXII."

All cotemporary authors ſpeak of Philip of Cabaſſole as a man of diſtinguiſhed merit: in the government of his dioceſe he was juſt and impartial; the Popes employed him in ſeveral nice and important offices, in which he conducted himſelf with wiſdom and dexterity. His mind was well cultivated, and enriched with a variety of knowledge; he gave all thoſe moments to ſtudy which were not employed in

public

public affairs. In the library of St. Victor at Paris, there are ſome works of his in manuſcript, which have never been printed. Petrarch gives his elogium in two words, "He was, ſays he, a great man with a little biſhoprick." His merit afterwards raiſed him to the higheſt dignities in the church.

Petrarch knew this prelate only by ſight, when he took the reſolution to fix at Vaucluſe: as ſoon as he got there, he went to pay his duty to him, as his biſhop and his lord. Philip of Cabaſſole loved men of wit and letters; he was acquainted with Petrarch's high reputation, gave him the moſt obliging reception, and expreſſed great joy to ſee him fixed in his dioceſe.

"He received me, ſaid Petrarch, as of old St. Ambroſe received St. Auguſtin, as a father and a biſhop; he afterwards vouchſafed to admit me to the ſtricteſt intimacy, and came ſometimes

to

to Vaucluſe with no other view than to ſee me."

THE Biſhop of Cavaillon had a caſtle at Vaucluſe, placed on the top of a rock, of which there remain now only the ruins. Its approach appears inacceſſible; and it is difficult to comprehend how it could ever be inhabited; we ſhall ſee, however, that Philip de Cabaſſole went there frequently. The people of that country, ſhew theſe ruins as the remains of the houſe of Petrarch; but they are miſtaken, for it was much lower, and nearer the river and the village. It was not long after this prelate became acquainted with Petrarch, that he had the misfortune to loſe one of his brothers, called Iſnord: he was a knight of St. John of Jeruſalem, and died in the flower of his age, during a voyage on the red ſea. As ſoon as our Poet heard this melancholy news, he went to Cavaillon, to condole with the Biſhop on his loſs.

He

He found him extremely affected, but calm as became a man of his dignity.

When Petrarch returned to Vaucluſe, he wrote the Biſhop a letter, in which he places before him every motive which could ſoften his grief: and at the ſame time mentions with admiration the becoming manner in which he received the compliments made him on this occaſion.

In the anſwer this prelate returned to Petrarch, he appeared moſt touched with the manner of his brother's death; and bitterly laments, that as he loſt his life on the ſea, his body had not received the honours of burial.

Petrarch took up the pen again, and taxed Philip with a weakneſs more natural to a woman, than a biſhop. He proves, that the place of interment can never have any influence on our happineſs in the other world, and he takes this occaſion

occaſion to ſpeak of antient cuſtoms with reſpect to the burial of the dead. He aſſerts, that the cuſtom of reducing the body to aſhes, was not an antient one among the Romans: that Lucius Sylla the Dictator, was the firſt of the Cornelian family who ordered his body to be burnt after his death; from the fear they ſhould treat him as he had treated Marius. His example was followed, though without the ſame reaſon, in thoſe who came after him. Petrarch ſhews in this letter, that there are errors which proceed from habit; that certain things, which give us horror, are nothing to people accuſtomed to them; and that a man of underſtanding ſhould ſhake off vulgar prejudices, and ſeek the truth in the nature of things themſelves.

PETRARCH had the happineſs to find another friend in the Provoſt of Cavaillon. Pons Sampſon obtained that dignity, by the promotion of Philip de Cabaſſole

baſſole to the epiſcopacy. Petrarch knew him from his childhood, and they had ſtudied together.

"He is juſtly called Sampſon, ſays Petrarch, for he has as much ſtrength of mind, as that ſcourge of the Philiſtines had of body. The Provoſt of Cavaillon joined to this, a great knowledge of letters, and a ſweetneſs of manners, which rendered his ſociety delightful. The Biſhop loved him extremely."

Petrarch, who had not ſeen him for ſome time, was charmed to find him ſo near, and to renew his former friendſhip.

We learn that Petrarch often received viſits in this ſolitude, which he had no reaſon to expect or hope for, from perſons of rank and genius, who came from Italy and the remoteſt parts of France, with no other view than to ſee and converſe with him. "Some there were, ſays

ſays he, who ſent before them magnificent preſents; perſuaded that liberality clears the way and opens the doors." They aſſured him, they came only to ſee him; and if they did not find him at Avignon, they ſet out immediately for Vaucluſe. He names only Peter de Poitiers, a man reſpectable for his piety and his knowledge; he entered very young into the order of the Cordeliers; he was afterwards promoted by the Popes John and Clement to the Priory of Cliſſon, and the Abby of St. Javin de Poitiers. His genius, or rather the taſte of the age he lived in, led him to view every ſubject in a moral light, which made his works deficient in variety.

All Europe was at this time in motion, expecting France to be invaded by the Engliſh. Edward III. at this time king of England, was a young prince full of fire, valour, and ambition; and poſſeſſed all the qualities that form a hero

hero and a conqueror. He diſputed the crown with Philip of Valois, under pretext, that being nephew of the deceaſed king by Iſabella his mother, he was a degree nearer than Philip, who was only his couſin-german. Philip oppoſed the Salic law, which excluded females from the ſucceſſion; the Engliſh lawyers of this time, who acknowledged this law in France, maintained they had excluded females, becauſe of their weak capacities, from wearing though they might tranſmit the crown. But in the aſſembly of the nobles, it was univerſally decided, that women could not give a right, of which they were not in poſſeſſion.

This deciſion appeared unjuſt to Edward, and confirmed his enmity to France. It began by little animoſities. Edward received Robert of Artois with open arms, who had been baniſhed from France for a falſehood he was guilty of in a proceſs at law: and Philip returned the compli-

ment, by receiving David de Bruce king of Scotland, dethroned by Edward Baliol whom the king of England ſupported.

THE emperor Lewis of Bavaria took the ſide of the Engliſh, and declared war againſt France. He ſummoned Humbert the dauphin of Vienne, who held his titles from the Emperor, to aid him in this war. Philip, on his part, invited Humbert as a vaſſal of the crown, to which his father had rendered homage, to come and join him at Amiens. Humbert, who was by no means of a warlike diſpoſition, found himſelf very critically ſituated; and he thought he might come off by ſtanding neuter. Petrarch knew the Dauphin well; he had ſeen him often at Cardinal Colonna's, when this prince was at Avignon. He had expreſſed a friendſhip for Petrarch, who was concerned to ſee him act a part contrary to his honour; and he undertook to

write to him, to draw him out of this lethargy, and to ſhew him the fatal conſequences which muſt enſue from it. It is probable, that Cardinal Colonna, who loved Humbert, and was intereſted in his glory, engaged Petrarch to write this letter, as follows:

"My attachment to you, forces me to break ſilence, and to write you a letter, which if it is read with the ſame diſpoſition in which it was written, may contribute to your glory, and ought to increaſe your kindneſs towards me. If the name of friend, with which you have honoured me, is not an empty title, I think it is my duty to rouſe you from ſleep, and to ſet before you the great perils with which you are threatened."

"You perceive what a war is kindling between the kings of France and England; your anceſtors have beheld nothing like it. All the princes, and

the nations of Europe are ſet in motion. Never has a wider field of glory been opened for the bravery of warriors. Already have thoſe people taken up arms, who inhabit the country between the Alps and the ocean. You alone live in peace, in the midſt of that whirlwind which encircles all."

"LISTEN to Virgil who aſks, Can you ſleep in the ſituation you are in? Do not you ſee the dangers that threaten you? Shame alone ſhould have drawn you out of your lethargy. While all the warriors in Europe, are armed and expoſed to the heat of the dog-days; can you remain buried in the boſom of luxury and eaſe? You are young, noble, robuſt, and powerful. You appeared, formerly, eager after glory; what reſtrains this deſire at preſent? You love ſloth; you fly from labour: but learn from Salluſt, that luxury and idleneſs ſuit none but women, and that labour is the

the lot of men. You fear death: But what is death? A ſort of ſleep. What difference is there between the day in which we begin, and that in which we end our lives? The firſt introduces us to pain and trouble: the laſt delivers us from both. Hence the cuſtom, drawn from the maxims of ſound philoſophy, to weep at the birth, and rejoice at the death of their friends."

"But even ſuppoſing death to be an evil, do you believe you can ſhelter yourſelf from it by a ſoft and effeminate life? Are you ignorant of the proverb, which ſays, The palate kills more than the ſword. Death ſeeks us and finds us every where. Would you then be ſo much attached to life, as to wiſh to prolong it at the expence of your honour? Many, had they died ſooner, would have preſerved the names they afterwards loſt; witneſs Tarquin, Claudius, and Pompey. Shall the fear of death then pre-

vent your going where your duty calls? Or can you think yourſelf in ſafety at home?"

"OPEN your eyes; and you will ſee an enormous maſs, moved by the efforts of a thouſand nations, ready to fall wherever fortune ſhall decree. Your enemies ſurround the King; you know he is not prejudiced in your favour. If he ſhould prove conqueror, do you think he will take your indolence in good part? If he is vanquiſhed, do you hope to reſt ſecure from thoſe dangers victory draws after it? Do not you fear being overwhelmed in the common ruin? They will ſay you remained neuter from fear, and not from good will. They will oblige you to be a ſpectator of the combat, however it may be decided. Call to mind what happened to Metius the Alban Chief, who retiring to an eminence with the deſign of declaring himſelf for the victor, was dragged to pieces between four

four horſes by the order of Tullus Hoſtilius. Take my advice, awake from your drowſineſs, and before it is too late, perform your duty. To remain inactive, when all the world is in motion, reſembles death rather than ſleep."

This letter had no effect upon the Dauphin. He paſſed the winter at Avignon, and went not to Paris till July following, where ſome buſineſs called him.

Petrarch ſpeaks of a little journey that he took about this time, with a man whoſe rank was ſuperior to his judgment. And in a letter wrote thirty years after to Philip of Cabaſſole, he gives this account of it:

"This great perſon, whoſe ſociety was diſpleaſing to me, invited me to go with him to St. Beaume. I conſtantly oppoſed his entreaties; but Cardinal Co-

lonna, to whom I could refuſe nothing, joined in them. I was obliged to comply, and ſuffered myſelf to be dragged thither. We paſſed three days and three nights in that ſacred and horrible cavern. Weary of the ſociety I came with againſt my will, I wandered frequently into the neighbouring foreſts. I had ſometimes recourſe to my uſual method of diſpelling the vexation one feels in diſagreeable ſociety. My imagination brought to my view my abſent friends, and I converſed with them in my thoughts as if preſent. I had not long had the happineſs of knowing you; but you came to my aid on this occaſion. I thought I ſaw you ſeated near, and converſing with me in my grotto."

GERARD, the brother of Petrarch, who was with him in this journey, took this opportunity to viſit the monaſtery of the Carthuſians, which is only two leagues from St. Beaume, and confirmed himſelf

himſelf in the project he had already conceived of becoming a Carthuſian.

Italy was ſtill in commotion, and all the reſt of Europe. The Biſhop of Verona was murdered in a fray, and Azon de Correge and William de Paſtrengo were ſent to Avignon to repreſent this affair to the Pope. Petrarch, who was then at Vaucluſe, no ſooner heard of their arrival, than he flew to Avignon, eager to ſee his dear friend. But hardly had he ſet foot in that city, when he felt his wound open again. Convinced that he had no reſource but in flight, and that he had not a moment to loſe, he returned that very night to his retreat, without ſeeing thoſe dear friends whom he ſought with ſo much ardour. After Petrarch was ſettled at Vaucluſe, whenever he made a journey to Avignon, he lodged in a little houſe belonging to Lelius, who was at Rome with the Biſhop of Lombes. As ſoon as William de

Paſtrengo heard that Petrarch was come to ſee him, he went immediately to this houſe: but finding no one there, he left the following billet:

"WHERE are you, my dear Petrarch? I knocked at the door of my friend Lelius. I called; no one made anſwer. Come out of your den, I beſeech you, and ſhew yourſelf to a friend who longs to behold you."

PETRARCH returned this anſwer:

"You were aſtoniſhed not to find me at Avignon, where I formerly was ſo happy to ſee you. But you ought to be ſtill more ſurpriſed, that having quitted the country at the ſeaſon when it is moſt agreeable to me, I ſhould return again in ſo much haſte without having embraced you. Liſten to my reaſons for a conduct ſo very ſingular. The ſun is going to ſet, and your courier haſtens

me,

me. I have not time to inform you of my ſufferings in the city you are in; perceiving that the only means of recovering my health was to leave it, I took this ſtep, notwithſtanding the efforts of all my friends to detain me. Alas! their friendſhip ſerves only to my deſtruction. I came into this ſolitude, to ſeek a ſhelter from the tempeſt; and to live a little for myſelf, before I was called to die. I was near the mark I aimed at; I felt, with extreme joy, my mind was more at eaſe; the life which I led, ſeemed to me to approach to that of the bleſſed in heaven. But behold the force of habit and of paſſion; I return often, though led by no buſineſs, into that odious city. I caſt myſelf into the nets, in which I was before enſnared. I know not what wind drives me from the port, into that ſtormy ſea where I have been ſo often ſhipwrecked. I am no ſooner there, than I feel I am in a veſſel toſſed on every ſide. I ſee the firmament on fire,

the

the ſea rage, and rocks ready to daſh me in pieces. Death preſents itſelf to my eyes; and what is worſe than death, I am weary of my preſent life, and dread that which is to come."

"THIS is all the apology I can make at preſent, for not having had the pleaſure of ſeeing you. The cares which conſume my heart, ſeized upon me as ſoon as I ſet foot in Avignon. They threatened me as a rebellious ſlave, who had broken his fetters. To avoid the new ones they were preparing, I fled with precipitation. I departed at night, not daring to attempt it by day. Touched with my condition, you will pardon me for not ſeeing you. You will plead my cauſe in the world, where they conſider as a madneſs my quitting the town to live in ſolitude."

WILLIAM DE PASTRENGO made this anſwer;

"YOUR

"YOUR precipitate flight, my dear Petrarch, diſpleaſed me extremely; with grief I found myſelf deprived of your converſation. Is it eaſy to bear the abſence of a friend, whoſe preſence is ſo delightful? Your letter came very ſeaſonably to diſſipate my chagrins, and refreſh my mind after the fatigues of buſineſs. I learn with pleaſure, that you have forced open the door of your priſon, and burſt the chains that bound you: that after having weathered a violent ſtorm, you are at laſt arrived at the port you aimed at, and lead in it a life of reflection and tranquillity."

"I SEE from hence, all you do at Vaucluſe in the courſe of the day. At ſun-riſe, awakened by the concert of the woods, and the murmurs of your fountains, you climb up the dewy hills, from whence you ſee under you, beautiful and well-cultivated fields, and perhaps the ſea covered over with ſails. You have always

always your table-book with you, to which you commit every moment ſome new production of your mind. When the ſun ſhines on the horizon, you go into your little houſe, to a repaſt ſimple as thoſe of Curius and Fabricius. This is ſoon followed by a ſhort ſleep, after which, to avoid the heat, you enter into the valley, where when the ſun begins to decline, the ſhadows of the mountains lengthen toward the Eaſt. I think I ſee that marvellous fountain which ſeems to ſpring out of the rock, from whence guſhing forth in ſhining waves, it flows in a beautiful river which waters the valley."

"I DISCOVER that tremendous cavern, which you enter when the water is low, and breathe a cool air in the burning heats of ſummer; that grotto ſuſpended on waters more tranſparent than glaſs; and I behold you ſeated in the ſhade, feaſting your eyes on thoſe delightful

proſpects. From hence viewing the things of the world as a ſhadow that is paſſing away, you renounce them to employ your time in ſuch productions as the Nymphs and the Muſes applaud. When you leave theſe contemplations, your hands are empty, but your tables are full. But think not to poſſeſs alone, the treaſures of your mind. Mine is never abſent, but partakes with you an enjoyment as uſeful as it is agreeable."

"Adieu, my dear Petrarch. Forget not your other ſelf."

William de Pastrengo remained a year at Avignon, occupied with the negociation he was charged with, and in which he ſucceeded. He went to Vaucluſe whenever he could ſteal a few hours from his buſineſs, and aſſiſted Petrarch in the cultivation of his garden. 1339.

Petrarch, after this, made ſeveral journies

journies to Avignon. He ſometimes fancied himſelf cured: but, like Virgil's hind, he always carried about with him the fatal arrow.

"I AM weary, ſays he, of my tears "which I ſhed day and night, and of "feeling that I am the wretched object "of my own averſion. At my ſepulchre "I would not have your name engraved "upon my tomb; a teſtimony to future "ages, that by the darts of Laura I was "bereft of life. Accept rather this ten-"der and faithful heart; treat it with "more kindneſs; dry up my tears, and "ſpeak peace to my ſoul!"

PETRARCH was in the unhappy ſtate peculiar to a love tender like his, when directed to an improper object, and whoſe ſociety he could therefore obtain very rarely, and for ſhort intervals only: he knew not how to think, or how to act; he was irreſolute and miſerable: when

he found himſelf more at liberty, he wiſhed for his chains; when oppreſſed by their weight, he ſighed for liberty. This it muſt be owned is a melancholy ſituation of the human mind, and the dreadful conſequence of a miſplaced affection. And whatever palliations may be drawn in excuſe for Petrarch, who lived in a dark age, under the clouds of ſuperſtition which at that time covered the world; no apology can be made with juſtice at preſent, for thoſe whoſe characters reſemble his in this unhappy point of view; ſince the light both of ſacred and moral truth, now clearly conveyed to all, rejects all ſophiſtry in reſpect to the internal diſpoſition, as well as the outward conduct, and condemns as certainly the inward encouragement of the paſſion, as the outward commiſſion of the crime.

Even Petrarch himſelf ſeems to have felt this truth, and cenſured his own conduct

duct on theſe principles, as well as bitterly lamented the ſufferings it cauſed him, in the dialogue he draws between himſelf and St. Auguſtin. The following ſentiments, drawn from ſome ſonnets he wrote about this time, addreſſed to the eyes of Laura, do alſo fully prove theſe ſufferings, and are too deſcriptive of Laura to be omitted.

"BRIGHT eyes! where Love has "eſtabliſhed his empire! it is to you I "addreſs myſelf. My Muſe is cold and "languid, but the ſubject I am upon "will cheriſh and inſpire it. To thoſe "who ſing your praiſe you give the wings "of love, which elevates them far above "all that is groſs and terreſtrial. Borne "upon theſe wings, I dare expreſs the "feelings which have long been concealed "in my heart."

"YE faithful witneſſes of the life I "lead; ye fields and flowers, ye moun-

"tains, woods, and vallies which ſur-
"round me; how often have ye heard
"me call death to my ſuccour! for ſhe
"who wounds is not touched with my
"diſtreſs."

"Bright eyes! ſerene beyond ex-
"preſſion! I complain not of you,
"though transfixed by your darts from
"which I cannot fly: behold the pale-
"neſs of my viſage, and then judge the
"condition to which you have reduced
"me!"

"But grief makes me wander; rather
"would I die in their preſence, than live
"deprived of their influence."

"Yes, charming Laura! I diſcover in your
"eyes a light which points out the path and
"guides me in the road to heaven. By
"a long and delightful ſtudy I read in
"them all that paſſes in your ſoul. It
"is this view excites me to virtue, raiſes

" me above the joys of ſenſe, and leads " me to true glory: it ſpreads over my " heart that inexpreſſible repoſe which " fills it with delight, and renders it in- " ſenſible to every other object. In this " ſtate of enjoyment, my thoughts, my " words, and my actions bear the ſtamp " of immortality!"

" THE happieſt lovers, the brighteſt " minions of fortune have never felt my " joy, when indulged with thoſe tender " regards beſtowed by Love and Laura. " I ſee it with grief; nature has not " formed me worthy of theſe heavenly " regards; but it is my ambition to be- " come ſo. If I can purify my heart, " if I can detach it from every inferior " impulſe, perhaps a good name will " compenſate for my want of endow- " ments. This is certain, that I ſhall " never find conſolation, but in thoſe " tranſporting emotions which are the " moſt

" moſt exquiſite gratifications to a chaſte " and tender heart."

" In paſt ages men filled with a noble " emulation, traverſed the ſeas and the " mountains to ſeek from a diſtant ſoil " things that were rare and excellent. " As for me, I need not travel far; for I " find every good thing in the eyes I " adore."

" As a pilot, who in the obſcurity of " the night toſſed by the tempeſt, raiſes " his eyes towards the heavens to direct " him in his courſe; ſo I in the ſtorms " of my paſſions turn towards my bright " and polar ſtars. Theſe are my direc- " tors; they are my guides in every ſtep " that I take. O Laura! I am nothing " without you. If cultivated by your " kind hand I ſhould produce any fruit, " the glory, the felicity will be yours."

We will now return to the affairs of Italy.

Benedict the XII. drew to Avignon, the beſt artiſts, to aſſiſt in raiſing that enormous edifice which he had planned for himſelf and his ſucceſſors.

Painting began at this time to revive. Giotto, the Pupil of Cimabue, who raiſed this art from its aſhes, died in 1336. He left a pupil who followed his ſtile of painting, and who had worked with him in Rome, at that famous Moſaic Picture, repreſenting the bark of St. Peter, toſſed by the tempeſt. This pupil of Giotto, was called Simon Martini; and ſometimes Simon de Sienna, becauſe he was born in that city. He attached himſelf to his maſter, and followed him to Rome, where he executed ſome pictures that eſtabliſhed his reputation. He worked afterward with ſucceſs in Tuſcany, always in the manner of

Giotto. After his death, Benedict invited him in a very preſſing manner, ſays Vaſari, to Avignon. He intended to have the hiſtory of the martyrs painted by him, for the ornament of his palace.

Simon was not famous for deſign, as is evident from ſome pictures of his at Piſa; the ſubjects of which are taken from the life of St. Renier: but he had invention, and ſucceeded admirably in portraits. When he came to Avignon, his behaviour gained him the love and eſteem of all the prelates, and he ſoon became acquainted with Petrarch. He loved his countrymen, and above all, men of genius, and he attached himſelf very ſincerely to the Sienneſe Poet; a certain affinity which ſubſiſts between poetry and painting, contributed to ſtrengthen the band of their union. Simon held the ſame rank among the painters as Petrarch among the poets.

PETRARCH defired his friend to draw a ſmall picture of Laura, ſo ſmall as to be portable. Simon, who was delighted to exerciſe his talents on ſo celebrated a beauty, gave Petrarch this mark of his friendſhip with the greateſt readineſs. There is yet at Avignon, in the houſe of Sade, an old picture of Laura, which was probably a copy of this given to Petrarch. Laura appears in it, dreſſed in red, holding a flower in her hand, with a ſweet and modeſt countenance, rather inclining to tenderneſs.

"PETRARCH complimented Simon on this occaſion in one of his poems. What a happineſs, ſays Vaſari, (who was himſelf an eminent painter in the ſixteenth century) for a painter to be united with a great poet! He ſhall draw a little picture, which can only laſt a certain number of years; becauſe painting is ſubject to all ſorts of accidents; and for his reward, he ſhall be immortaliſed by verſes

verſes which are beyond the reach of time.

Whether the imagination of Simon was ſo filled with Laura, that it was ever preſent when he propoſed to paint a beautiful woman; or whether he meant by this to oblige and expreſs his acknowledgments to Petrarch; it is certain he drew her figure on many occaſions in which ſhe had no concern.

On a painting in Freſco, ſhe is dreſſed in green, at the feet of St. George, on horſeback, who delivers her from the Dragon. This piece is under the Portico of Notre-Dame de Dons, and is much damaged by the injuries of the weather; Laura is placed in another of his pictures, in the church of St. Marie Novella at Florence. Among the females who repreſent the pleaſures of the world, we ſee Laura dreſſed in green, with a little flame riſing out of her breaſt,

her gown ſtrewed over with flowers. In another picture in the ſame Church, Petrarch is drawn ſtanding by a Knight of Rhodes. At Sienna alſo they ſhow a picture of the Virgin drawn by Simon, which is a portrait of Laura; ſhe is there dreſſed in green, with her eyes fixed on the ground, which was her common attitude. All theſe pictures of Laura were not thought ſufficient by Simon to expreſs his love for Petrarch. There was a manuſcript of Virgil upon vellum, with the commentaries of Servius, which he greatly prized. Simon painted on the firſt leaf of this manuſcript, very elegant figures, which repreſented all the ſubject of the Eneid. This is to be ſeen at Milan in the Ambroſian Library.

1340. THE firſt years of Petrarch's reſidence at Vaucluſe, were employed in a deep ſtudy of the Roman hiſtory; and he undertook to write it from Romulus to Titus: an immenſe work, in an age when manu-

manuſcripts were rare, and the ſubject ſtill buried in obſcurity. His imagination was warmed with the fine paſſages in the life of Scipio Africanus. By a ſort of inſtinct, he had from childhood given Scipio the preference to the heroes of antient, as Stephen Colonna to all thoſe of modern Rome. He wiſhed to write an epic poem on this ſubject. At that time, this was the utmoſt effort of the human mind; and the moſt probable means of gaining him the laurel crown; for which honour he had long ſighed. He was not diſcouraged by difficulties. He ſet about, and proſecuted this work with ſo much ardour, that in the ſpace of a year, the poem was far advanced. He gave it the name of Africa; becauſe it recited the victories of Scipio over the Carthaginians in the ſecond Punic war. If Petrarch had known the poem of Silius Italicus on this ſubject, he would hardly have undertaken it; but that being concealed in a monaſtery was not found till 1415: that of Ennius

he

he was acquainted with. Ennius, ſays he, has ſung fully of Scipio, but in the opinion of Valerius Maximus, his ſtile is harſh and vulgar. There is no elegant poem which has for its ſubject the glorious actions of that conqueror of Hannibal. I am reſolved to celebrate his victories in the beſt manner I am able.

THE Biſhop of Cavaillon, fearing that his cloſe application to this work, would deſtroy his health, which appeared to him already injured, came one day, and aſked him for the key of his library. Petrarch, not aware of his intention, gave it him immediately. The Biſhop, after having locked up his books and his papers, ſaid to him, I command you to remain ten days without reading or writing. Petrarch obeyed; but it was with extreme reluctance. The firſt day that he paſſed after this interdiction appeared to him longer than a year. The ſecond he had a violent head-ach from morning

to night; and on the third, he felt ſome ſymptoms of a fever. The Biſhop touched with his condition, reſtored to him in the ſame moment his keys and his health.

Notwithstanding his enthuſiaſm for Scipio, Petrarch was not ſo abſorbed but that he found time for other ſtudies. He had long deſired to learn the Greek language, that he might read Homer and Plato, of whoſe works there were at that time no tolerable tranſlations.

"The name of Homer, ſays he, is hardly known to thoſe Barbarians, from whom we are only ſeparated by the Alps. Would to God we were divided from them by the ocean itſelf! The book which paſſes under the name of Homer, is only an abridgment of the Iliad, done by a ſchool boy whoſe name is unknown."

The

THE Greek language was never totally loſt in Italy, but at the time I am ſpeaking of, there were hardly ſix perſons who were acquainted with the rudiments of it; and though Dante in his famous poem, cites ſeveral Greek authors; Manneti and Philelphe aſſure us that he was ignorant of that language.

PETRARCH was ſo happy this year, as to have an opportunity of learning it at Avignon. And this engaged him to make a longer ſtay in this city, than he had ever done ſince his eſtabliſhment at Vaucluſe. Barnard Borlaam, a Greek by deſcent; but born in Calabria, a monk of St. Baſil and Abbe of St. Sauviur at Conſtantinople, came to Avignon on an embaſſy from Andronicus the young Greek Emperor, to the Pope; to procure a council for the re-union of the Greek and Roman churches, which had ſeparated in the ninth century. The pretext for this ſchiſm was, that the Greeks

Greeks believed the Holy Ghoſt proceeded immediately from the Father: the Latins, from the Father and the Son; and ſome diſpute about the conſecration of the holy bread. Borlaam brought letters of recommendation from Philip king of France, and Robert king of Naples, to fecilitate the ſucceſs of his negociation.

Boccace thus deſcribes this Greek envoy, whom he knew at Naples:

"Borlaam was a little man with great knowledge and underſtanding. Greece has not for many years produced ſo wiſe a man. He was profoundly verſed in all that relates to hiſtory, in philoſophy, and the Greek language; and from the princes and learned men in Conſtantinople he received certificates, which atteſted the ſuperiority of his abilities. He had a ſubtle and penetrating mind; and perfectly underſtood Euclid, Ariſtotle, and Plato. But he expreſſed with

with difficulty, what he conceived with amazing eaſe and quickneſs."

PETRARCH was ſolicitous to be acquainted with ſuch a man as Borlaam, and ſought with eagerneſs to be inſtructed in the Greek language. Borlaam, on his ſide, wiſhed as much to be acquainted with the Latin tongue, which he knew only a little of, having been educated by maſters who ſpoke that language. Theſe views ſoon united them. They began by reading Plato. From this philoſopher Petrarch drew many refined ſentiments on the nature of love, the origin of ſouls, their tranſmigration, and their paſſage into the planets when diſencumbered from the body. Petrarch would ſoon have become perfect in the Greek language, under this able maſter, had he continued at Avignon. But the bad ſucceſs of his negociation haſtened his departure. Petrarch was in deſpair at loſing his tutor; and Borlaam generouſly owned,

owned, that in this commerce he had learnt much more than he was able to teach.

The loſs of one friend, however, was made up to Petrarch by the arrival of another; who was as neceſſary to regulate the motions of his heart, as this Greek maſter was to increaſe the riches of his mind. This was father Dennis, whom Petrarch had ſo often conſulted about his paſſion. He could not have arrived at a more fortunate moment; his patient wanted more than ever the exertion of his ſkill; for relapſes are the rocks moſt to be feared, as well by the phyſician of the ſoul as the phyſician of the body. This wiſe Auguſtin, being advanced in years, thought it time to quit the pulpit, and the univerſity of Paris, where he had appeared with great honour, to enjoy the ſweets of repoſe in the boſom of his country; and came to

Avignon

Avignon with the intention of going by ſea to Florence.

PETRARCH did all he could to engage him to viſit Vaucluſe, and finding him reluctant, he ſeconded his ſolicitations with a billet, as follows:

"CAN nothing induce you, my dear maſter, to come to my ſolitude? Neither the beauties of the place, nor the friendſhip you have always expreſſed for me? Will nothing tempt you to come to a friend, ſolitary and abandoned? Will not my ardent requeſt, and the pity you muſt have for my condition, determine you to paſs ſome days with your diſciple, and honour his retreat with your preſence? If theſe motives are not ſufficient, permit me to employ others, which appear to me irreſiſtible. There is in this place, a poplar tree of ſo immenſe a ſize, that it covers with its ſhade not only the river and its banks, but

but alſo a conſiderable extent beyond them. They tell us, that king Robert of Naples, invited by the beauty of this ſpot, came here to unburden his mind from the weight of public affairs, and enjoy in this delightful ſhade the ſweets of repoſe. He brought with him his Queen, as famous for her beauty as her birth; Clemence his niece, the widow of a great king; and a prodigious train of lords and ladies."

"While this brilliant court amuſed themſelves in wandering over the meadows, hunting in the woods, drawing the ponds, and contriving a thouſand rural games on the banks of the river; the King, ſeated on the enamelled lawn under the ſhade of this fine tree, was buried in deep thought. His penetrating mind, accuſtomed to pry into the bowels of the earth, ſought perhaps ſome ſecret of nature: or perhaps he was converſing with fortune, and ſaying, You may con-

tinue to overwhelm me with favours, but I am not to be blinded by your deceitful careſſes; for I know that death purſues, and will ſoon raiſe me beyond the circle of them all. He might perhaps be meditating ſome great project, to puniſh the perfidious prince who ſo unjuſtly withheld a part of his kingdom. Whatever were the reflections which occupied the mind of this great man, they were certainly ſublime and worthy of him."

"AND will not you, my dear maſter, come with tranſport to a place ſo honoured? Will not you revere the tree that covered him, and kiſs with tranſports the ſacred footſteps of a prince, who will be held in veneration by poſterity?"

THE King, of whom Petrarch gives ſo high an eulogium, in which flattery had no part, was Robert, ſon of Charles the II. and grandſon of Charles the I. He

He was the third king of Naples, of the houſe of Anjou; and was crowned at Avignon, the ſame year that Pope Clement the V. eſtabliſhed the Holy See in that city, of which Robert was the lord in his own right as Count of Provence.

"He was, ſays Petrarch, the only true king of his time, for I call none kings but thoſe who rule themſelves. In him every virtue was united; he was a good maſter, a good father, a good huſband: religious from principle, courageous from nature, pacific for the good of his people. He was the only prince who loved letters, and encouraged men of learning. He received them with kindneſs, and attended with pleaſure to their works. He loved to communicate what he knew, and he bluſhed not to learn even in his advanced age. One of his favourite ſayings was, We acquire knowledge by giving and receiving inſtruction."

"NEITHER the capriciouſneſs of fortune, whoſe favours and whoſe cruelties he had alternately experienced, the ignorance of his time, nor the contempt in which ſcience was held, could detach him from ſtudy. In the midſt of the moſt important affairs, in the tumult of war, day and night he would always have his books about him. He became by this means, a philoſopher, theologian, mathematician, aſtronomer, and even a phyſician; and was beſides well verſed in hiſtory, belles lettres, and all the ſciences."

BOCCACE, who was ſoon after this united with Petrarch, being at Naples before he produced thoſe works which have ſince rendered him ſo celebrated, obtained from this prince the moſt gracious reception, and knew him well. "He is, ſays he, the wiſeſt king that has reigned ſince Solomon. All the world was of the ſame opinion. He was, how-

ever, a believer in judicial aſtrology, which was the folly of the age he lived in."

This prince made a voyage into Provence in 1319, and reſided at Avignon four years, in the court of John the XXII. who owed his elevation to Robert, and had a ſincere regard for him. And it was at this time he went to viſit Vaucluſe, the account of which Petrarch gave in the above letter.

Father Dennis yielded at laſt to the ſolicitations of Petrarch, who had addreſſed this monk with great ſkill, as he had a ſingular attachment and veneration for king Robert. Their union began at Avignon, and was founded upon a great ſimilarity of taſte and knowledge, and had been kept up ever ſince by an interchange of letters, in which the moſt important queſtions were diſcuſſed. Unhappily for Petrarch, father Dennis who

was in haſte to return to his country, made but a ſhort ſtay at Avignon. On his arrival at Florence, he found that city more agitated than ever by the inteſtine commotions already mentioned.

In July of the ſame year, there was an eclipſe of the ſun in the ſign of Cancer, which happens, ſays Villani, only once in a hundred years; and announces, according to the antient aſtrologers, very heavy calamities. On this occaſion, their judgment proved true; a great deal of miſchief was done by violent ſtorms, and by the plague and famine at Florence. Theſe calamities determined father Dennis to yield to the invitations of king Robert, who had preſſed him a long time to come and end his days in his court. The King received him with open arms, and gave him an apartment in his own palace, that he might enjoy more of his ſociety. By a public act, he beſtowed on him houſes for

for the foundation of a convent, and a church at Carbonora, which is a ſuburb of Naples.

In the firſt converſations which father Dennis had with this prince, he ſpoke to him of Petrarch as of a man whom he highly loved and eſteemed. Robert already knew Petrarch by reputation, and the eulogy of father Dennis augmented the good opinion he had conceived of his character, and determined him to ſend him a letter. It is much to be lamented, that this letter is loſt. He incloſed in it an epitaph for the judgment of Petrarch on the niece we have mentioned; and who was, ſays Villani, a queen of great virtue and knowledge. He takes the occaſion to lament, as a Chriſtian and a Philoſopher, the miſeries of life, and the neceſſity of death; oppoſed to which, there is no conſolation but in the hopes of immortality. It is eaſy to imagine the joy of Petrarch, when he received

this mark of goodneſs from a prince of whom he had a long time conceived the higheſt idea, and whoſe favour and approbation he paſſionately deſired. This was the anſwer he returned:

"I KNOW not which I ought moſt to admire in the letter I have received, the juſtneſs and dignity of the thoughts, or the graces of the ſtyle. I did not imagine the human mind capable of expreſſing its ideas on ſo ſublime a ſubject with ſo much variety, ſtrength, and preciſion. The beginning of your letter, in which you paint in ſo lively a manner the misfortunes of human life, made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion on me; that I almoſt repented I ever came into the world: but the hand which made the wound, contributed to heal it. What you ſay of the immortality of the ſoul, relieved my drooping ſpirits; and I then felt a kind of joy that I was born mortal. After having broken the chains which impriſon the

the ſoul, and caſt off the outward covering, how delightful to be cloathed with that immortal robe, which will render our bodies pure and incorruptible! This expectation, which our faith preſents to us, was unknown to the heathen philoſophers: but they felt that the ſoul was not to die. Pherecydes was the firſt among them who openly maintained this truth; Epicurus the only one who denied it. From Pherecydes it paſſed to Pythagoras, from Pythagoras to Socrates, and then to Plato, who compoſed a treatiſe on that ſubject, which Cato of Utica ſtudied, to prepare himſelf for death. And Cicero eſtabliſhed this doctrine in his diſcourſes on friendſhip, old age, and many other parts of his works."

"But to whom do I ſay theſe things? Fool that I am! Not only to the greateſt of kings, but to the greateſt of philoſophers. Deign to pardon me, illuſtrious prince, if carried away by my zeal for the

the ſubject, I ſought to confirm by foreign teſtimonies, a truth which verifies itſelf, and makes me ſigh for that day ſo generally dreaded by mortals. I envy the fate of that niece, whoſe epitaph you vouchſafed to ſend me; whoſe humble and courteous manners, though a ſovereign princeſs, rendered her truly worthy of the name ſhe bore. Though taken from hence in the bloom of youth and beauty, univerſally regretted, as well in the kingdom where ſhe was born, as in that to which ſhe ſucceeded; ſhe yet appears to me moſt happy, becauſe you have immortaliſed her here, and ſhe is enjoying a felicity that is everlaſting. How then can any one call that princeſs dead, who lives in fame on earth, and is exalted to bliſs in heaven? Your epitaph will tranſmit the memory of your niece with your own to poſterity; and it will be ſaid of her, as Alexander ſaid of Achilles, How happy is ſhe to be celebrated by ſo great a poet! But I fear I ſhall

weary

weary you by the length of my letter. The elegant conciſeneſs of yours warns me to conclude. I pray Heaven to preſerve a life crowned equally with the laurels of Mars and of Apollo."

Some time after this, Petrarch received a letter from father Dennis, inviting him to come and enjoy with him the tranquillity and bounty he poſſeſſed. To which Petrarch made this reply:

"Since the time I have ceaſed to hear your friendly voice, nothing has given me ſo much pleaſure, as the report ſpread at Avignon, that you was gone to Naples to the court of king Robert. Nothing, in my opinion, contributes ſo much to the delight and tranquillity of life, as the intercourſe and converſation of wiſe men. You underſtand me, but I will ſpeak with more clearneſs. Cicero ſaid, Who was greater than Themiſtocles in Greece? And I

ſay

ſay with ſtill more truth, Who is greater than king Robert, not only in Italy, but even throughout Europe?"

"In this view, it is not the luſtre of his crown that dazzles, or his power that weighs with me; it is his mind, his manners that I admire. True kings are more rarely met with than we imagine: we ſhould ſee fewer ſceptres and crowns, if theſe alone were honoured with them. It is a folly to give that name to the ſlaves of paſſion, who live like brutes rather than men. I think Robert the only one who deſerves that title; for he has ſhewn by a thouſand inſtances of patience and moderation, that he knows how to govern himſelf."

"This prince has ſent for you, and you have obeyed his ſummons. A perfect conformity in your ſtudies and diſpoſitions unites you: this is quite natural. If I was ſpeaking to any other but your-

yourſelf, I ſhould ſay that the king could not procure himſelf a greater relief under the fatigues of government. As to you, you will obtain at Naples that inward peace which you could not have poſſeſſed amidſt the diſorders in Tuſcany. When I heard you were there, how happy, cried I, is father Dennis! He will now lead a peaceful life. I will ſoon follow you! You know that I aſpire to the poetic laurel; and I would owe it only to king Robert. If I am ſo happy to be ſummoned by him, I will fly immediately, and conſecrate to him my talents and my ſtudies."

From time immemorial, the laurel had been the reward of valour, merit, and genius. Virgil ſpeaks of it in the Æneid, where they crowned the victors in the Pythian games. The Romans early adopted this practice. The laurel being conſecrated to Apollo, the god of poetry, it was natural to crown poets with

with it as well as conquerors. Petrarch ſays in his Africa, ſpeaking in the character of Ennius to Scipio: Permit us to partake with you in the honour of this crown. If glory belongs to the talents of the mind, as well as to military proweſs; it is but juſt to adorn with laurel the brows of poets, as well as the brows of heroes. This tree, by its perpetual and beautiful verdure, announces immortality both to the one and the other. It may be added, the paſſion which Petrarch had for Laura, rendered him ſtill more deſirous of this honour. This cuſtom had however been aboliſhed at Rome, more than a thouſand years.

At laſt the moment came, when he arrived at the height of his wiſhes. And the manner of obtaining this honour, was ſtill more flattering than the honour itſelf.

In Auguſt of the year 1340, being at

at Vaucluſe, occupied with the thoughts of Laura and his poem, at the third hour, that is to ſay about nine in the morning, Petrarch received a letter from the Roman ſenate, who urged him with many preſſing entreaties to come to Rome to receive the crown of laurel. On the ſame day arrived a courier from Robert Bordi, Chancellor of the univerſity of Paris, in which this friend and countryman joined every motive which was capable of inducing him to give the preference to Paris for the performance of this ceremony. Nothing could be more flattering to Petrarch than this honourable concurrence of the two greateſt cities in the world, diſputing which ſhould have the glory of crowning him. This was the brighteſt period of his life.

In the firſt moments of his intoxication, being uncertain how to determine, he wrote thus to Avignon to Cardinal Colonna:

" Who

"WHO would have gueſſed that ſuch honours would have purſued me amidſt my rocks? I know there is nothing ſolid in this world, and that we run after ſhadows. But I cannot help comparing my ſituation to that of Syphax, the moſt powerful king in Africa, who received at the ſame time the ambaſſadors of Rome and Carthage contending for his alliance. I own to you I know not which to prefer: I am agitated by powerful motives on both ſides."

"AT Paris, there never was a poet crowned. I ſhall be the firſt; this novelty pleaſes me, and diſpoſes me to that ſide. But the veneration I have for Rome, where the greateſt poets have received the laurel, inclines the balance to the other. Friendſhip draws me to Paris, but Rome has king Robert for its neighbour, and I know no perſon more capable of judging of my abilities. You ſee my perplexity. I fear leaſt in my joy I ſhould

I ſhould decide improperly. Deign to adviſe me. To whom but you can I addreſs myſelf? You who are my pilot, my ſupport, and my glory!"

We ſee in this letter, that Petrarch inclined towards Rome; and the anſwer of the Cardinal was conformable to this inclination: to which Petrarch thus replies:

"I receive with gratitude, and I embrace with pleaſure the advice you have given me. You love your country, but you prefer truth above all. I ſhall go where you command; and if any cenſure the choice I have made, I will ſhield myſelf under your name."

Petrarch went to Rome in the beginning of the ſpring; but as he had not ſuch an opinion of his works as to believe they merited this great honour, he determined to ſubmit to a public exa- 1341.

mination, which is never exacted of one ſo eſtabliſhed in reputation. He had a mind alſo to pay this literary homage to the king of Naples: and he requeſted the permiſſion to preſent himſelf at his tribunal, to undergo this examination. Robert was pleaſed with the preference given him on this occaſion.

THE joy of Petrarch would have been compleat, if he could have flattered himſelf with finding at Rome the Biſhop of Lombes, and to have had this dear friend witneſs of his glory. But as ſoon as he had extinguiſhed the fire of diſcord, and eſtabliſhed peace in his family, he returned to his church which had been ſeven years deprived of its paſtor. His ſoul, which was without ceaſing occupied in weighing the importance of his duties, always determined in favour of thoſe which were the moſt ſerviceable to mankind. The grief of the Romans was extream, to loſe this tutelary angel, who had re-

eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed harmony and peace among them, and ſeveral times preſerved their city from fire and pillage. This worthy prelate was ſo eager to return to thoſe ſheep that Providence had committed to his care in a barbarous country, that he only paſſed through Avignon, and ſtopped but a moment to embrace his brother the Cardinal; nor did he ſee Petrarch, who was at that time at Vaucluſe: from whence hearing of his departure from Rome he wrote theſe lines:

"I AM going to Rome, where I ſhall need you above all others; you who are my delight and glory, muſt at leaſt be with me in mind."

"You will ſay, perhaps, Why this ardour, this labour, this fatigue? What is the end of it all? Will it render you more wiſe or virtuous? No. This crown will only ſerve to expoſe you to public view, and in conſequence to the

darts of envy. Science and virtue, are they birds which require branches of trees on which to fix their neſts? What uſe will you make of theſe laurels with which your brow is to be encircled? To all theſe I ſhall content myſelf with replying in the words of the wiſe Hebrew, 'Vanity of vanities, all is but vanity.' Such are the follies of men. Take care of yourſelf, and be favourable to me."

AFTER having written this letter, Petrarch ſet out for Marſeilles, and embarked from thence for Naples, notwithſtanding his dread of the ſea.

ROBERT learned with pleaſure, that he was arrived in his kingdom; he gave him the moſt honourable reception in the preſence of all his court; and in the converſations he had with him, Robert found that the friends of this poet had not impoſed upon him. Petrarch on his ſide, admired the depth of this prince's mind,

mind, and the variety of his knowledge. He was extremely pleaſed with the ſituation of Naples, on account of the ſoftneſs of the climate, and the delightful verdure of the country around it. The tomb of Virgil is near Naples; and it is ſaid a laurel ſprung up round it, and flouriſhed for ſeveral ages.

Robert was curious to ſee the poem called Africa; it had made much noiſe, though the draught of it was barely ſketched out. Petrarch with difficulty confided ſo unformed a work to this prince. Robert was ſo pleaſed with it, that he hinted a wiſh to have it dedicated to him when it ſhould be made public. Petrarch engaged, and kept his word after the death of that prince; a ſingular mark of reſpect. This poem was the moſt indifferent of Petrarch's works, and he bluſhed for it ſome years after. But Robert was no poet. "I did not think, ſays he, after he had converſed

with Petrarch, that under the frivolous appearance of poetic fiction, ſuch ſublime ideas could be contained." This prince, to give more weight to his own approbation, appointed a day to examine Petrarch in form; when queſtions were propoſed to him by Robert, on all ſubjects of learning; and this examination was continued the two following days. Then Robert after a great eulogy on Petrarch, declared that he merited the laurel crown; and had letters patent drawn up, by which he certified that after a ſevere examination he was judged worthy to receive that honour in the capitol. Robert wiſhed Petrarch to receive this crown at Naples; but he repreſented to this prince, that he was deſirous of obtaining it on the ſame theatre where Virgil, Horace, and ſo many other poets of the firſt order, had before been crowned. This prince had the complaiſance to enter into his reaſons; and to compleat his kindneſs, he teſtified his regret that his

his advanced age would not permit him to go to Rome and crown Petrarch himſelf, repeating ſeveral times that his dignity as a king ſhould have been no obſtacle.

As Robert could not himſelf accompany Petrarch, he named John Borrili, one of his firſt courtiers, to be his proxy upon this occaſion. Boccace ſpeaks of Borrili as a man of great abilities, and a good poet. Petrarch compares him to Ovid. He was well deſcended, his family had been highly honoured by Charles the I. of Naples; and he was the favourite of king Robert.

Petrarch, a little time before his departure from Naples, had a converſation with Robert, which proves the great taſte this Prince had for letters, and the honour in which he held them. He aſked Petrarch why he thought ſo late of paying him a viſit?

"GREAT King, replied our Poet, I have long wiſhed for this happineſs; but fortune has always oppoſed me. I own, to my ſhame, that the perils I had to encounter by ſea and by land, deterred me."

THE converſation after this falling upon Philip of Valois, king of France; Robert ſaid to Petrarch, Have you never been at his court? "I have not even had the leaſt deſire to go," replied Petrarch. And why ſo? ſaid the Prince ſmiling. "Becauſe, replied Petrarch, it ſeems to me, that I could only be a uſeleſs and a troubleſome perſon to an ignorant king. I would much rather live in an honeſt mediocrity, than drag a uſeleſs life in a court, where no one ſpoke my language."

"IT occurs to me, ſaid the King, that the eldeſt ſon of Philip loves ſtudy. I have alſo heard it, replied Petrarch, but it does not pleaſe the father; they

even

even ſay, he looks upon the preceptors of his ſon, as his enemies."

At theſe words, Robert, ſeized with horror and indignation, after a ſhort ſilence, cried out, raiſing his eyes to heaven: "how different are the taſtes of men! For my own part, I ſwear that letters are dearer to me than my crown; and if I muſt renounce one or the other, I would immediately ſacrifice my diadem."

When Petrarch went to take leave of king Robert, this Prince, after engaging his promiſe, that he would viſit him again very ſoon, took off the robe he wore that day, and begged he would accept it, and wear it at his coronation. And that he might expreſs his affection by every poſſible means, he had a breviate drawn up and given to Petrarch, by which he conferred on him the

the place of general Almoner: great intereſt was always made for this poſt, on account of the privileges attached to it; the principal of which were exemption from paying the tithes of benefices to the King, and a diſpenſation from reſidence.

THERE was at this time at Naples, 1341, a man of extraordinary learning, to whom Boccace gives ſingular commendation; this was Paul de Perouſe, who had many years been librarian to king Robert. As he was very curious, and poſſeſſed of all ſorts of knowledge, he had collected, by order of his maſter, a great number of foreign books in hiſtory and poetry. His ſearch after theſe books had united him very ſtrongly with Barlaam, the wiſe Grecian, who has already been mentioned. It was by his means, he obtained from Greece, thoſe books he could not meet with among the Latins. He compoſed an immenſe work, entitled

entitled "Collections," which was full of erudition, and comprehended all that had been ſaid by the Greeks and the Latins, on the Pagan divinities.

BOOK

BOOK III.

ORSO Count of Anguillara was Senator of Rome when Petrarch arrived there, and was to continue in office but a few weeks longer. We have ſeen that Petrarch paſſed ſome time in his caſtle at Capranica. Orſo, who was very deſirous of crowning Petrarch himſelf, wrote to inform him he muſt begin his journey immediately, if he would give him this ſatisfaction.

PETRARCH ſet out from Naples in April with John Borrili, who having ſome affairs to tranſact in the way, took another road, promiſing to meet him at Rome. The day after Petrarch got there, not finding Borrili, he diſpatched a courier to haſten him, the day of the ceremony

mony being fixed. But he came back without him, and the Count of Anguillara would not permit any delay.

THE aſſembly was convoked early in the morning on Eaſter-day, which happened to be very ſerene and favourable to the ſolemnity. The trumpets ſounded, and the people, eager to view a ceremony which had been diſcontinued for ſo many years, ran in crowds to behold it. The ſtreets were ſtrewed with flowers, and the windows filled with ladies dreſſed in the moſt ſumptuous manner, who ſprinkled as much perfumed waters on the poet as would ſerve for a year in the kingdom of Spain.

PETRARCH appeared at laſt at the capitol, preceded by twelve young men in ſcarlet habits. Theſe were choſen out of the firſt families of Rome, and recited his verſes; while he, adorned with the robe of ſtate which the king of Naples

had given him, followed, in the midſt of ſix of the principal citizens cloathed in green, with crowns of flowers on their heads: after whom came the Senator, accompanied by the firſt men of the council. When he was ſeated in his place, Petrarch made a ſhort harangue upon a verſe drawn from Virgil: after which, having cried three times, Long live the people of Rome! Long live the Senator! God preſerve them in liberty! he kneeled down before the Senator, who, after a ſhort diſcourſe, took from his head a crown of laurel, and put it upon Petrarch's, ſaying, "This crown is the reward of merit." Then Petrarch recited a fine ſonnet on the heroes of Rome; this ſonnet is not in his works.

The people ſhewed their joy and approbation by loud and repeated ſhouts; by clapping their hands; and crying out ſeveral times, Long flouriſh the capitol! Long live the poet! Stephen Colonna then

then ſpoke; and as he truly loved Petrarch, he gave him that praiſe which comes from the heart.

PETRARCH's friends at Rome ſhed tears of joy. And though he was himſelf in a ſort of intoxication, he felt at the bottom of his ſoul, that ſuch honours were incapable of conferring true happineſs, and far exceeded his deſert. "I bluſhed, ſays he, at the applauſes of the people, and the unmerited commendations with which I was overwhelmed."

WHEN the ceremony in the capitol was ended, Petrarch was conducted in pomp with the ſame retinue to the church of St. Peter, where after a ſolemn maſs and returning thanks to God for the honour he had received, he took off his crown to place it among the offerings, and hung it up on the arch of the temple.

The ſame day the Count of Anguillara had letters patent drawn up, by which the Senators, after a very flattering preface, declare Petrarch to have merited the title of a great poet and hiſtorian; and that at Rome, and in every other place, by the authority of king Robert, the Roman Senate, and the people of Rome, he ſhould have full liberty to read and comment on poetry and hiſtory, or on any of the works of the antients, and to publiſh any of his own productions, and to wear on all ſolemn occaſions the crown of laurel, beech or myrrh, and the poetic dreſs. In fine, they declare him a citizen of Rome, with all the privileges thereof, as a reward for the affection he has always expreſſed for the city and republic.

Petrarch was then brought to the palace of the Colonnas, where a magnificent feaſt was prepared for him, at

which were aſſembled all the nobility and men of letters in Rome.

It cannot, after this view, be unintereſting to join with it what Petrarch thought of this event in his maturer life.

"These laurels, ſays he, which encircled my head, were too green; had I been of riper age and underſtanding, I ſhould not have ſought them. Old men love only what is uſeful; young men run after appearances, without regarding their end. This crown rendered me neither more wiſe nor eloquent; it only ſerved to raiſe envy and deprive me of the repoſe I enjoyed. From that time, tongues and pens were ſharpened againſt me: my friends became my enemies, and I ſuffered the juſt effects of my confidence and preſumption."

It was not the fault of Borrili, that he came not to Rome to aſſiſt at the co-

ronation of Petrarch. He fell into an ambuſcade of the Hernici, from whom he at laſt with difficulty eſcaped.

Petrarch, deſirous of avoiding the viſits and compliments which follow ſuch a ceremony, departed a few days after. Fortune thought proper to remind him, that pleaſure and pain are cloſely allied in this life. Hardly was he got out of Rome with his train, when he fell into the hands of ſome banditti, with which the high roads were then infeſted. He eſcaped alive by a kind of miracle, and returned to Rome; where the peril he had been in, cauſed a great diſturbance; they gave him an eſcort, and he ſet out again the day following.

He arrived at Piſa the 20th of April, from whence he wrote an account of what had paſſed to king Robert, and his friends at Avignon. He did not ſtay long there. Eager to diſplay his crown at

Avignon, and above all to the eyes of Laura, and then to lay it at the feet of the Biſhop of Lombes, he ſet out in the beginning of May, and went by land, chuſing rather to paſs the Alps than truſt his life to the mercy of the ſea. In croſſing Lombardy, he turned out of the road to make a viſit to Azon de Correge at Parma.

AZON, with his brothers, had juſt gained a victory over the party that oppoſed them in Parma, and beſought Petrarch to ſtay and enjoy with them the peace and felicity they had obtained. He excuſed himſelf, from the ties he had to Cardinal Colonna; but they were ſo preſſing, that he wrote the following letter to the Cardinal:

"RETURNING from Rome with my crown, I come to viſit your friends at Parma, who have defeated their enemies, and are now in peaceable poſſeſſion of this

this city. I was ſolicitous to give you this information, from which I know you will derive much pleaſure. This city has changed its face; peace, liberty, and juſtice, which were baniſhed, are returned, and the joy of the people is inconceivable. I could not reſiſt the entreaties of your friends, who inſiſted I ſhould paſs the ſummer with them. Their politeneſs and goodneſs urge the impoſſibility of parting from me ſooner; but in what can I be uſeful to them! Born as I am for ſolitude, and fond of leiſure, I fly the noiſe of cities, and ſeek the ſilence of the fields. Your friends, who know my ſentiments, aſſure me of perfect tranquility when time ſhall have calmed the preſent emotions of joy. You will ſee me again in the beginning of winter; ſooner, if you command, later, if fortune will have it ſo."

Nothing could be happier than the firſt year of the government of the Cor-

reges at Parma; they acted as fathers, not maſters, and adminiſtered juſtice with great wiſdom; they ſuppreſſed all exorbitant taxes, and enriched thoſe families whom the avarice of their enemies had reduced to beggary. Petrarch was in a manner aſſociated with Azon and his brothers; and they did nothing without conſulting him, which not a little flattered his ſelf-love. And ſoon after his arrival at Parma, there happened a ſingular circumſtance which did not contribute to leſſen it.

A SCHOOL-MASTER of Pontremoli, old and blind, who knew Petrarch only by fame, was deſirous to ſee him, as he expreſſed it. And being informed he was at Naples, he ſet out on foot for that place, ſupporting himſelf on his ſon's ſhoulder. But he got there too late, for Petrarch was already ſet out for Rome. The King being acquainted with the motive of his journey, had a mind to ſee him. He appeared

peared a ſort of monſter; his face reſembled one which was in bronze at Naples. The King ſaid to him, If you have ſo much ambition to behold Petrarch; you muſt make haſte and ſeek him in Italy, for he will not make a long ſtay, and if you miſs him there, you will be obliged to go to France, to ſatisfy your curioſity. I muſt abſolutely ſee him before I die, replied the old man; I would go and ſeek him in the furtheſt Eaſt, if it was neceſſary, and death would give me time for ſo long a journey. The King admiring his enthuſiaſm, gave him money to defray his expences.

He went immediately to Rome, and not finding Petrarch there, he came back to Pontremoli; but when he heard he had ſtopped at Parma, he reſolved to ſet out again and ſeek him there: to do this he muſt croſs the Appenines. The ſnows with which theſe mountains were entirely covered, did not deter him. He

thought it neceſſary to anounce himſelf by ſome verſes, which he ſent to Petrarch; and they were not bad ones.

When he arrived at Parma, he was led to Petrarch's houſe, and as ſoon as he was near him, he gave himſelf up to the moſt exceſſive tranſports. He was lifted up by his ſon, and one of his ſcholars, that he might embrace a head which, he ſaid, had conceived ſuch noble ideas. He then took the hand of Petrarch, and ſaid, Let me kiſs that hand which has written ſuch delightful things. He paſſed three days at Parma, full of this enthuſiaſm: This ſingularity excited the curioſity of the inhabitants of that city. As the blind man had always a croud about him; he ſaid one day to Petrarch, I fear I am a burden to you, but I cannot ſatisfy myſelf with beholding you, and it is but juſt you ſhould ſuffer me to enjoy a pleaſure, for which I have travelled ſo far. The word behold, in the mouth of a blind man, having raiſed peals of laughter in the people around

around him; he turned toward Petrarch, and ſaid: I take you for my witneſs; Is it not true, that blind as I am, I ſee you better than all thoſe laughers, who look at you with both their eyes?

Azon, the moſt generous of men, enchanted with the diſcourſe of this good old man, and with his paſſion for Petrarch, overwhelmed him with preſents; and he returned to Pontremoli highly gratified.

Petrarch, though extremely flattered by the friendſhip ſhown him, was glad to ſteal from public life, as often as he could, and to wander in the fields and woods, which were his greateſt delight. One day, led on by his love of exerciſe, he paſſed the river of Lenza, which is three leagues from Parma, and found himſelf in the territory of Rhegio, in a great foreſt, which is called the Silva Piana, or low wood, though it is ſituated upon a hill, from whence are diſcovered

covered the Alps and all Ciſalpine Gaul. He gives this deſcription of the place in a letter to a friend:

"AGED oaks, whoſe heads ſeem to touch the clouds, ſhelter the avenues to this foreſt from the rays of the ſun. The freſh breezes which deſcend from the neighbouring mountains, and many little rivulets which wind along, temper the violent heats. In the greateſt droughts, the earth is always covered with a ſoft verdure, and enamelled with flowers. Here all kinds of birds warble out their ſongs, and deer of every ſort run ſporting about. Nature has raiſed in the middle of this foreſt a theatre, which ſhe ſeems to have formed expreſly for poets. The ruſtling of the leaves, the ſinging of the birds, and the murmurs of the ſtream, invite to repoſe. The earth exhales a delicious odour. It is the theatre of Elyſium. Even the ſhepherds and labourers revere this ſacred place. Its beauty ſtruck me: I felt

I felt myſelf all at once inſpired by the Muſes; and I made ſome verſes with a facility I had never before experienced."

This fine ſituation revived ſo ſtrongly in the mind of Petrarch his taſte for ſolitude, that he was obliged at his return to Parma to ſeek a little houſe in a remote place, where he might be at eaſe, and ſheltered from the ceremonies of public life. He found one at the end of the city, near the abby of St. Anthony, which perfectly ſuited him. It had a garden watered by a little river.

"I have, ſays he, a country in the middle of the town; and a town in the midſt of the fields. When I am tired with being alone, I have only to ſtep out, and I find ſociety immediately; when I am weary of the world, I re-enter my houſe, and again poſſeſs the delight of ſolitude. I enjoy here a repoſe, which the philoſophers at Athens, the poets on Parnaſſus,

Parnaſſus, and the anchorites in the deſarts of Egypt, never knew. O fortune! leave in peace a man who wiſhes to lie concealed. Go out of his little houſe, and attack the palaces of kings."

He was ſo pleaſed with this cottage, that he determined to purchaſe and rebuild it, as we ſee in a letter of his to William de Paſtrengo:

"Are you curious to know what I think, what I wiſh, what I do? The life which I lead at preſent, is a ſearch after repoſe; and not flattering myſelf I ſhall find it on earth, I feel without fear that I am taking haſty ſteps towards the manſions of death. I would leave the priſon in which my ſoul is confined."

"I dwell at Parma; and paſs my life in the church, or in my garden; tired of the city, I wander oft into the woods. Though fortune treats me more favourably,

favourably, I have not changed my manner of living. I work with ardour at my Africa, without expecting any other reward but a vain and tranſitory glory. True glory, I know it well, is the reward of virtue alone. I have built a ſmall houſe, ſuch as ſuits the mediocrity of my ſtation. There is little marble to be ſeen in it: I wiſh I was nearer your fine quarries, or that at leaſt the Adige came to bathe our walls. The verſes of Horace have cooled my ardour for building; they preſent to me my buſt, and my laſt dwelling; and I reſerve my ſtones for my monument.

If I perceive a little chink in my new walls, I find fault with the maſons, and they reply that all the art of man cannot render them firmer; that it is not aſtoniſhing, new foundations ſhould give way a little; that mortal hands can build nothing that will be everlaſting; and in fine, that my houſe will be of longer duration

duration than myſelf and my ſucceſſors. Penetrated with the truth of their obſervations, I bluſhed; and ſaid to myſelf, Fooliſh man! make ſure the foundations of thy earthly tabernacle, which is falling to decay! Render that firm while it is yet in thy power. Thy body will fall before thy building, and ſoon ſhalt thou be forced to quit both dwellings.

"THESE reflections would make me renounce my deſign, if ſhame did not retain me; would not the paſſengers laugh at me when they obſerved my walls hanging in the air? I proceed therefore and haſten my work: but I am undetermined. Sometimes I content myſelf with a little houſe, like that in the garden of Curius, or that in the field of the old man of whom Virgil ſpeaks in his Georgics. Sometimes I give way to the idle fancy of raiſing my houſe to the clouds, and ſurpaſſing even the buildings of Babylon and Rome. The moment after, I become

become modeſt again, and hate every idea that ſavours of luxury and pride. Thus does my ſoul float in perpetual uncertainties, and knows not where to fix. To ſee others agitated in the ſame manner is all my conſolation; and I laugh at them, at myſelf, and at the world."

After having viewed Petrarch for a long time ſurrounded with agreeable objects, and flattering events, we muſt now turn to a leſs pleaſing picture, and ſee him bewailing the death of ſeveral of his beſt friends.

The firſt of theſe was Thomas de Caloria, with whom he had ſtudied at Bologna, and always kept up a correſpondence. He died at Meſſina, his native place, on his return from a journey he made to Lombes, to paſs ſome time with James Colonna. It was this journey which prevented his being at Rome at the coronation of Petrarch, who learned this

this melancholy news by letters from the brothers of Thomas. They wrote to him to beg him to write his epitaph. This was Petrarch's anſwer:

"We were of the ſame age, and the ſame opinions; we purſued the ſame ſtudies, had the ſame diſpoſitions, and aimed at the ſame end. Never was there a ſtricter union, or greater ſimilarity. When I learned that I had loſt the better part of myſelf, life became a burden to me; I wiſhed to die, but could not. I had a violent fever, which brought my end in view; but it was only a glimmering of futurity. I was at the gate of death, and found written thereon, Return! Thy hour is not yet come. I came back to life with this conſolation, that I could not be detained long. I know that Seneca ſays, 'It is abſurd to deſire what it is in our power to obtain:' but though I admire the genius of this philoſopher, I think often very differently

from him; and above all, on this ſubject, where his ſentiments are ill-founded and carry no weight."

The Biſhop of Lombes wrote at this time to Petrarch, to compliment him upon his coronation in the following ſingular ſtyle:

"If all the parts of my body were ſo many tongues; if all the voices which have ever exiſted were to cry out together; they would not expreſs the joy I felt when I learned, that the young Florentine poet had been crowned with laurel in the capitol."

This prelate preſſed Petrarch in the moſt earneſt manner, to come and ſee him at Lombes, and officiate as Canon in his church. Petrarch had promiſed to go the beginning of the year following: and he looked forward with joy to that time, when he ſhould have finiſhed

his Africa, and ſhould lay that and his crown together at the feet of the man whom he adored. He had even formed a project of ſettling entirely near this amiable friend, when he received the melancholy news that the Biſhop was dangerouſly ill at Lombes.

THIS information alarmed him exceedingly: he fluctuated between fear and hope. One night in my ſleep, ſays Petrarch, I thought I ſaw the Biſhop walking alone, and croſſing the ſtream that watered my garden. I ran to him, and aſked him a thouſand queſtions at once. From whence came you? Where are you going ſo faſt? Why are you alone? The Biſhop replied with a ſmile: 'Do you recollect the ſummer you paſſed with me on the other ſide the Garonne? The climate and the manners of Gaſcony diſpleaſed you, and you found the ſtorms of the Pyrennees inſupportable. I now think as you did. I am weary of it myſelf. I have bid adieu

adieu to this barbarous country, and am returning to Rome.' He had continued to walk on while he ſpake theſe words, and was got to the end of the garden. I attempted to join him, and begged that I might at leaſt be permitted the honour of accompanying him. The Biſhop gently put me back with his hand, and changing his countenance and the tone of his voice; No, ſaid he, you muſt not come with me at preſent. After having ſaid this, he looked ſtedfaſtly at me. And then it was that I ſaw on his face all the ſigns of death. The ſudden ſhock of this ſight, cauſed me to cry aloud, and awaked me from my ſleep. I marked the day, and related the circumſtances to the friends I had at Parma, and wrote an account of it to my other friends in many different places. Five and twenty days after this I received the mournful news, that the Biſhop of Lombes was dead; and found that he died on the very day, that I had

ſeen him in viſion in my garden. "This ſingular accident, ſays he to John Andre, gives me no more faith in dreams than Cicero, who as well as myſelf had a dream confirmed by the event."

How heavy was this loſs to Petrarch! How many others likewiſe were ſufferers on this occaſion! The houſe of Colonna, of whom the Biſhop was the ſupport, the joy, the conſolation: the city of Rome, which looked upon him as its guardian, and tutelar angel: the court of Avignon, where he had many relations, admirers, and friends: in fine, his epiſcopal town, where he was univerſally loved and reſpected. He had behaved in this deſart place with ſo much dignity and condeſcenſion, that every perſon of conſequence, except himſelf, was aſhamed to ſee him fixed there. He was contented with his lot, and inacceſſible to ambition: he conſidered the honours of this world as the precipices of

of virtue, and ſhunned them with as much care as others purſue them. The Patriarchate of Aquilea becoming vacant at the time he was at Rome, he was named for it by the nobility and the people. But he wrote to his brother the Cardinal, that they muſt not think of him for that place, for he would not accept of it. The jealouſy and avarice of the Gaſcons, who filled the court of Rome, and diſturbed the Italians, had at firſt ſuſpended his elevation; but his virtue and merit roſe ſo high, that he would certainly have been raiſed to the purple, if death had not ſtopped him in the midſt of his career.

A LITTLE time before he died, he wrote to the Cardinal his brother, concerning reports which had been ſpread of his approaching elevation. The Cardinal ſent this letter to Petrarch, who could not read it without ſhedding a torrent of tears.

"EVERY line of it, ſays he, breathes modeſty; the love of moderation; freedom from ambition; and contentment with his lot. In it are the principles of the ſoundeſt philoſophy, expreſſed in the moſt noble and exact manner. What a man! And muſt ſuch men, who ought to live for ever, die ſooner than others!"

"WE have lived too long, ſays he to Lelius, who had received the laſt breath of this amiable prelate. We have loſt the beſt of all maſters, the tendereſt of all fathers. What ſhall I do? What will become of me? I am at Parma only a bird of paſſage. Shall I go to Lombes, where I am a Canon? It is an odious climate, a barbarous country, and I have loſt the only perſon that could render that ſituation agreeable. How can I look upon that tomb where all my hopes lie buried? How ſhall I ever bring myſelf to kiſs the hands of a proud prelate, a barbarian, inſtead of thoſe of

the amiable maſter I have loſt? Shall I go to Avignon, and reſume my place in the court of our Cardinal? How mournful will that ſituation be, now it is deprived of its greateſt ornament!"

Lelius had inherited from his anceſtors, an attachment to the houſe of the Colonnas, but he went beyond them in this attachment, and had devoted himſelf particularly to the Biſhop, whom he attended every where, and could find no conſolation for the loſs of ſuch a friend.

A rumour was ſpread, that Cardinal Colonna intended to remove the body of his brother from Lombes to Rome. On this matter Petrarch ſays to him, "Divided between a city of which I am a citizen, and a church in which I am a canon, I know not what counſel to give you." Three years after this, the remains of this great prelate were carried

to Rome, and received with a great deal of veneration.

In a letter to the Cardinal, Petrarch declaims very much againſt a ſuperſtitious cuſtom which reigned at that time, and above all in the court of the Pope; and which he wiſhed to baniſh from the houſe of the Cardinal. In ſpeaking of a man lately dead, they pronounced only the firſt ſyllables of his name, and made uſe of ſome epithet before them, as unhappy, unfortunate.

"Shew no ſuch weakneſs! ſays he to the Cardinal; ſupport this loſs with courage; you are expoſed to public view, you ought to be more obſervant of your conduct than another. And as your name, your rank, and your actions have ſet you up for an example, become alſo in this inſtance a model worthy the imitation of all the world."

No

No one will ſuppoſe, that after the death of the Biſhop, Petrarch had any difficulty in renouncing his Canonry at Lombes. He parted with it entirely; and was well recompenſed by the Archdeaconry of Parma, which juſt then became vacant.

As it was the firſt dignity of the church of Parma, next to the mitre, it connected him much with the Biſhop. Hugolin de Roſſi had governed this church eighteen years; and as he was of that illuſtrious family, which had ſo long diſputed the lordſhip of Parma with the houſe of Correge, Petrarch feared this prelate would be diſpleaſed to ſee at the head of his Chapter, a man whom he believed devoted to his enemies, and who had pleaded their cauſe againſt his family in 1335, as has been before obſerved. But Hugolin, who was full of ſweetneſs and equity, not only did not expreſs the leaſt reſentment towards Petrarch;

trarch; but gave him a very favourable reception the firſt time he ſaw him, and afterwards the moſt flattering diſtinction. It was remarked, in ſpeaking of that cauſe, that Petrarch had avoided with great circumſpection ſaying any thing againſt this prelate, who was preſent, and whoſe birth and virtues he reſpected.

PETRARCH's tears were ſcarcely dried up for the Biſhop of Lombes, when they were again called forth for another dear friend.

1342. AT the beginning of this year, death deprived him of that wiſe man, who had been his director and his friend, the good father Dennis, whom king Robert had drawn to Naples. This prince conferred upon him, by leave of the Pope, the biſhopric of Monopoli; which became vacant ſoon after his arrival at Naples. He did not long enjoy this dignity;

nity; he died at Naples the 14th of January, in the palace of king Robert.

"I would weep, ſays Petrarch in a letter to king Robert, but ſhame and grief prevent me. I knew before, that there is no ſecurity againſt death. Of this truth we have now a melancholy proof! He has taken from Italy, a man over whom he ought to have had no power, and whoſe name will live for ever. This learned man, who ſo well underſtood both nature and the world, muſt think this life of little moment. He has loſt nothing by death: and though happy on earth, becauſe he poſſeſſed your love, he will be much happier in heaven, whither he is tranſlated."

"It is I who ſuffer; it is Italy, it is his country, that is deprived of ſo great an ornament. It is the world whom death has robbed of an abundant ſource of truth and knowledge."

"But

" But it is you, oh beſt of princes! who are the moſt deeply affected with this loſs. The ſociety of father Dennis, was the charm and comfort of your life. Whoſe converſations were more entertaining, mild, and uſeful? Whom could you find ſo worthy to liſten to you, or ſo capable of comprehending the myſteries of heaven, when you vouchſafed to diſplay your eloquence, and extenſive knowledge? If great princes may be allowed to indulge their tears, you cannot refuſe them to father Dennis. Muſes! join your tears to mine! And weep with me the loſs of a favourite ſo dear, a favourite who did you ſo much honour! Let all Parnaſſus mourn, and reſound with your lamentations! Inſpire me with ſome verſes to engrave upon his tomb!"

EPITAPH on FATHER DENNIS.

" Here lies Father Dennis; the flower of

of poets; the ſearcher into futurity; the glory of Italy. A faithful friend; mild and amiable in ſociety; his ſoul and his countenance were always ſerene; and notwithſtanding the elevation of his mind, and the luſtre of his eloquence, he was always modeſt and condeſcending. Among the antients he would have been a rare, among the moderns he was an unequalled character."

These accumulated loſſes made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon Petrarch, that he could not open a letter without apprehenſion and fear. Had it not been for theſe diſtreſſes, he would have led at Parma a tranquil and agreeable life. This city is finely ſituated on the Po, in a valley which lies between the Alps and the Apennines, below the caſcades of the one, and the thunders and torrents of the other. It is ſurrounded with a rich and fruitful plain, where cheriſhed by the influence of the ſun and the

waters, the vine, the elm, and all ſorts of fruits and grain, flouriſh together.

PETRARCH divided his time between his church, where he filled up with honour his office of Archdeacon, and his cloſet, where he principally worked at his Africa. He ſeldom went to make his court to his lords, who nevertheleſs treated him with great reſpect. He had not been a year in this city, when the orders of his ſuperiors obliged him to quit this ſituation, and return to Avignon. It is not clear from whence theſe orders came, or what could be the foundation of them. It is probable that Cardinal Colonna, with whom Petrarch had promiſed to paſs the winter, ſummoned him to keep his word.

IT appears however, that he complied much againſt his will, by the bitter complaints he makes to Barbatus of Sulmone: "I AM

"I am forced, ſays he, to croſs the Alps, before the ſun has melted the ſnows which cover them. I muſt return to the banks of the Rhone, and to thoſe infamous places which are the receptacle of every evil. What a deſtiny! If fortune envies me a grave in my own country, let me be permitted to ſeek one under the pole! I conſent to live and to die in Africa, among its ſerpents; upon Caucaſus, or Atlas; if while I live, I may be allowed to breathe a pure air, and after my death, a little corner of the earth, where I may beſtow my body; this is all I aſk; but this I cannot obtain. Doomed always to wander, and to be a ſtranger every where, oh fortune! fortune! fix me at laſt to ſome ſpot. I do not covet thy favours; let me enjoy a tranquil poverty; let me paſs in this retreat the few days that remain to me. How miſerable are we! Nothing is certain in this world. The wheel of fortune is for ever in motion; we tremble on its ſummit;

ſummit; in the middle we are ſuſpended; and at the bottom we are trampled upon. I have pleaſed myſelf below; yet am agitated as if in the clouds. To no end have I avoided elevations; this is what I have a long time complained of; but my complaints have been in vain."

"WHEN we ſail upon the ocean, tempeſts and ſhipwrecks are to be expected: but to be expoſed to hurricanes on the land, to be ſwallowed up by the waves of a brook, this is monſtrous indeed. I am again obliged to quit my country, and thoſe friends who are dear to me. I am ordered to take a ſafe rout; but the enemy occupies every road. I muſt go through the Tridentum of the Alps, croſs the lakes of Germany, and paſs the Danube and the Rhine near their ſources. Alas! I muſt obey, and ſubmit to the yoke. Fortune had forgot me; and I paſſed a year in tranquillity. It is her pleaſure now to force me from a ſweet repoſe,

repoſe, and plunge me again into a frightful chaos! How happy are you, my dear Barbatus! Take my advice, and never quit your neſt.

Petrarch ſet out for Avignon 1342; and it was a great joy to him when he arrived there, to find his two friends Lelius and Socrates, who came to live with the Cardinal after the death of the Biſhop of Lombes. The union of theſe three friends became ſtronger than ever. Socrates in particular gave himſelf entirely to Petrarch, and never quitted him even when he went to Vaucluſe, where few of his other friends had the courage to follow him.

Soon after his return to Avignon, Petrarch was witneſs to a great event. Benedict the XII. had for ſome years had a fiſtula in his leg, which obliged him to keep his chamber. At the petition of the Cardinals, he held ſome conſiſtories

ſeated on his bed, according to the cuſtom of that age. The diſcharge being more than common, the phyſicians attempted to ſtop it, and threw it back into the blood, where it made ſuch havock as to threaten a very ſpeedy death. Petrarch perceiving that Benedict's laſt moments were coming on, wrote the following letter to the biſhop of Cavaillon:

"What are you doing, my father? And what think you will be the end of the preſent tempeſt? Shall we gain the port, or be ſwallowed up by the waves? The veſſel cannot withſtand the billows. The wind is violent; the rowers are without experience; and the pilot, deſpiſing the rules of his art, makes too faſt towards the land, which is the rock of navigators. He confides too much in a deceitful calm, and ſteers his courſe by wandering planets, inſtead of adhering to the faithful pole. Full of wine, weighed

ed down by age, overpowered with drowſineſs; he ſtaggers, he ſleeps, and is falling into the ſea. And would to heaven he fell alone: would to God, that our heavenly Father, ſeeing us erring without a pilot, in an agitated ſea, would himſelf conduct the bark which he has purchaſed with ſo great a price!"

"Such is the condition we are thrown into, by the ignorance of our pilot. What do I ſay? His indolence; his blindneſs, his ſhameful cupidity, and his paſſion for a vile and ſtormy country. Ah! why did they take him from his father's plow, to commit to him a government of which he was ſo incapable? But he is going to receive the recompenſe he merits. This man, the jeſt of all parties, the object of inceſſant ridicule, will ſoon become the prey of ſea-wolves."

"What will become of us? We may

ſeek a plank that may ſave us in our ſhipwreck. Our conſolation is, we can ſcarcely find ſuch another pilot; if we could, we ſhould be loſt for ever. If you aſk what is my opinion; I think we ought to come and ſettle in your country, and thus ſhelter ourſelves from the approaching tempeſt. Reflect upon theſe things."

THIS Pontiff deſpiſed Italy, and was therefore deteſted by Petrarch. Benedict carried this contempt to ſuch a height, that one day ſome eels being ſent him from the lake of Bolſena, of a prodigious ſize, and exquiſite flavour, he diſtributed moſt of them among the Cardinals, reſerving for himſelf but a very ſmall portion. Some days after this, the cardinals going according to cuſtom, to attend upon him at dinner, he ſaid to them in a jeering manner; Gentlemen, if I had taſted the eels before I ſent them, you would not have had ſo large a ſhare; but I confeſs, I did not believe that

Italy produced any thing that was good. Cardinal Colonna who was preſent, reddened with anger, and could not help replying; that he was aſtoniſhed, one who had read ſo many books as his holineſs, ſhould be ignorant that Italy was the mother of every thing that was excellent.

Benedict died the 25th of April, 1342, and was interred at Notre-Dame; where his monument is now to be ſeen. A contemporary author aſſures us, that a monk who had been a brother in the ſame convent with Benedict, ſaid to him ſome time before his death, you will die ſoon if you do not amend your life.

The holy See was vacant only thirteen days. All the ſuffrages were united in Pierre Roger, Cardinal of Aquilea, who took the name of Clement VI. He was of an antient family, and had paſſed through many honours, as the Proviſor of the Sorbonne, the Archbiſhoprics of

Sens and Rouen, and the Chancelorſhip of Paris; having the ſeals conferred on him by Philip of Valois. After which, Benedict the XII. made him Cardinal in the promotion that took place 1338. The coronation of this Pope was conducted with great pomp, and was performed the 19th of May, in the church of the Dominicans. John Duke of Normandy, eldeſt ſon of the king of France, James Duke of Bourbon, Philip Duke of Burgundy, Humbert Dauphin of Viennois, and ſeveral other great lords, aſſiſted at the ceremony.

THE court of Rome immediately changed its appearance; and there was a magnificence and luxury unknown in the preceding pontificates. Clement the VI. was condeſcending, frank, noble, and generous. He had the taſte and manners of a nobleman, who had always lived in the courts of Princes. No ſovereign of his time appeared with more eclat, or diffuſed his favours with more grace

grace or liberality. Nothing equalled the ſumptuouſneſs of his furniture, the delicacies of his table, or the ſplendour of his court, which was filled with lords and gentlemen of antient nobility. Accuſtomed to live among ladies, whoſe ſociety amuſed him, he did not think the papacy obliged him to alter his manner of life. They continued to viſit him as uſual. In truth, this did not add to the decorum of his court, but it rendered it very agreeable and brilliant.

This Pope had great qualities, but an exceſſive luxury of character, which cauſed him to be ſpoken of by many authors with great bitterneſs. His reputation for generoſity and benevolence, together with a bull of invitation that he publiſhed, drew to Avignon this year more than a hundred thouſand ſcholars; who all returned with ſome favour ſhown them. It would be hard to give credit to this, if we did not recollect that his

predeceſſor left a great number of benefices vacant, becauſe, as he ſaid, he found no perſon worthy to fill them. Clement the VI. thought and acted in a very different manner. His hands were ever open; and his favourite maxim was, That no one ſhould depart unſatisfied from the palace of a prince.

As ſoon as they were informed at Rome of the election of Clement, they ſent a ſolemn embaſſy to make him three principal requeſts. The firſt, that he would vouchſafe to accept the office of ſenator; as diſputes on this head, had often made that city a prey to civil wars. The ſecond, that he would haſten the re-eſtabliſhment of the holy ſee at Rome. And the third, that he would be pleaſed to reduce to fifty years, the indulgence which Pope Boniface the VIII. had granted to the Church, and fixed at an hundred years; and that the reaſon for this their prayer was, that all the faithful might

might partake of it; the time appointed by Boniface, exceeding the ordinary term of life.

After two months conſideration, the Pope returned this anſwer: That as to the firſt, it belonged to him as ſovereign of Rome: that he would however accept the municipal government in his right as Cardinal, without derogating from his ſovereignty: That as to the ſecond requeſt, no one could be more deſirous than himſelf of the return of the holy ſee to Rome; but he could not fix the time till the affairs of France and England were in a more tranquil ſtate. And that with reſpect to the jubilee, he granted with pleaſure the reduction they aſked, and fixed this indulgence to return every fifty years.

Petrarch, who had obtained the dignity of Roman citizen by letters patent at his coronation, was one of the ambaſſadors

ambaſſadors ſent from Rome to Pope Clement; he was joined with Nicholas Gabrini, called Rienzi, and appointed to make an oration before the Pope. In this ſpeech, he uſes his favourite figure when ſpeaking of Rome; he deſcribes an old woman, bowed down with grief and misfortune, who comes to throw herſelf at the feet of her huſband. You deſired to ſee me, ſays ſhe, when I was in bondage to another; and I fear not being as dear to you, now I am again become yours. You judge not like the vulgar, who deſire ardently what they have not, and are eaſily diſguſted with what they have.

THE reward of this oration, which was a long one and very dry, was the priory of St. Nicholas, in the dioceſe of Piſa, which the Pope gave to Petrarch the ſixth of October, 1342.

THE Pope granted two ſmall favours this

this year, to two of Laura's children. Her daughter Ermeſſenda was received into the convent of St. Laurence, where ſhe profeſſed herſelf ſome time after; and Audibert her ſon was appointed to the canonry of Notre-Dame de Dons. Theſe children were about twelve or thirteen years of age.

We are now come to Rienzi, Petrarch's colleague, who was ſoon after this very ſingularly diſtinguiſhed in the revolutions of Rome. His origin and character were as follows. His father kept a public houſe, and his mother was a waſher-woman. But he made up for the lowneſs of his birth, by the elevation of his wit and underſtanding; his imagination was lively and brilliant; he had a prodigious memory, and a natural eloquence which drew after him the whole world. His parents, though ſo meanly ſituated, ſpared nothing in the courſe of his education. When the firſt ſtudies of grammar

grammar and rhetoric had poliſhed his mind, and improved his natural eloquence, he applied himſelf to the ſtudy of the Roman hiſtory, and the ſearch into its antiquities; to which he joined a great knowledge of the civil law, and the rights of the people. The commentaries of Cæſar, were much read, and much eſteemed by him.

RIENZI's enthuſiaſm for Rome united him firmly with Petrarch, and could be the only foundation of a connection between men of ſuch different characters. He ſucceeded alſo with Clement, who admired his eloquence, and was never weary of his converſation. He had likewiſe at firſt the good graces of Cardinal Colonna, probably through the favour of Petrarch; but which he afterwards loſt, by inveighing bitterly againſt ſome great lords in Rome. The Pope conferred upon Rienzi, the place of notary at Rome, which was a very lucrative poſt.

Theſe

Theſe honours paved the way for the extraordinary ſituation, in which we ſhall ſoon behold him.

Clement VI. had a fine natural underſtanding, which he had enriched and improved by ſtudy. Petrarch ſays, he forgot nothing that he read, and if he wiſhed to do it, he had it not in his power.

He had gained in his converſation with the female ſex, and in the courts of princes, a ſoftneſs, and politeneſs of manner which endeared him to every one. When he reſerved to himſelf the nomination of the greater prelacies, to ſatisfy the deſire he had of beſtowing favours, it was repreſented to him, that ſuch reſerves, would produce great inconveniencies, and that his predeceſſors had not dared to make them. He replied, my predeceſſors knew not what it was to be popes.

IT was in the pontificate of this Pope, that the city of Avignon, where debauchery had long reigned, came at laſt to the greateſt exceſs of luxury and diſſoluteneſs. The accounts which Petrarch gives of the licentiouſneſs and neglect of all decency in this city, are fully confirmed by other writers.

ON the return of Petrarch to Avignon, Laura behaved to him in a kinder manner. Perhaps a long abſence made her feel more ſenſibly that ſhe was not indifferent to him; perhaps too his reputation made ſome impreſſion on her mind. However this was, the favour of the Pope, and the kindneſs of Laura, rendered Avignon more agreeable than uſual to Petrarch. He paſſed the greateſt part of this year there; and went to Vaucluſe but ſeldom, and for a ſhort time: and when he was in that ſolitude, he owns that his ſoul was always at Avignon with Laura.

Petrarch was one day ſeated in a public place, to which he knew Laura would come, and meditating on his uſual ſubject, with his eyes fixed on the ground; when ſhe appeared ſuddenly before him. As ſoon as he perceived her, he roſe, and making her a low bow, was going to ſpeak. She caſt upon him a kind look, returned him the ſame ſalutation; and paſſed along, ſaying ſomething he did not perfectly hear. Theſe obliging manners filled Petrarch with extreme joy.

At this time, Petrarch made a connection with Sennucio Delbene, a Florentine of noble birth, and who favoured the party of the Gibelins. There is an anecdote relating to him, which the people of Florence ſpeak of with indignation. Charles of Valois being ſent to Florence, by Pope Boniface the VIII. on public affairs, was much delighted with the diverſion of hawking. Sennucio had

a country houſe near the city, where Charles often went to refreſh himſelf on theſe occaſions. Sennucio accommodated him in the beſt manner he could, and as ſuited a gentleman of his rank. This hoſpitality did not prevent the Prince from impriſoning him, becauſe he was of the party oppoſite to that he favoured; and condemning him to pay a fine of four thouſand livres: his eſtate alſo was confiſcated. But by the favour of John the XXII. Sennucio was re-eſtabliſhed in all his rights in the year 1326. He was attached to the Colonnas, and above all to Cardinal John Colonna, which gave riſe to the friendſhip between him and Petrarch.

SENNUCIO was fond of the arts. He had a tender heart, and was attached to the fair ſex. He was alſo a poet, but his lyre was ſtrung to lighter meaſures, not ſad and plaintive like that of Petrarch.

I do not know how it was, that Sennucio was admitted to the houſe of Laura, but it appears, that he ſaw her often; and that Petrarch often converſed with him on the ſubject of his love.

The praiſes Petrarch had beſtowed on Laura, rendered her celebrated every where. All who came to Avignon had a ſtrong deſire to ſee her. But though ſhe was not yet thirty years of age, ſhe was ſomewhat altered. Whether this was owing to her having had many children, to illneſs, or domeſtic chagrins; ſhe had no longer her former clear and brilliant complexion. Petrarch alſo, by a kind of ſympathy, loſt that beautiful complexion, which had been ſo univerſally admired. In a letter written to a friend, whom he had not ſeen for ſome time, he ſays, "I am not what I was; the perpetual diſcord between my ſoul and my body has changed me ſo much, that you would hardly know me again."

THIS year, 1342, died at Avignon a lady, who was greatly beloved by Gerard, the brother of Petrarch.

"THE object, ſays Petrarch to him, "of your tender love has left us, to enjoy "celeſtial glory. I hope it at leaſt, and I "believe it! The ſweetneſs of her man- "ners, and the virtues of her life, will "not fail to inſure her this felicity. Take "back therefore, for it is high time, the "two keys of thy heart. Thus relieved "from anxiety, and thy path clear before "thee, follow this beloved object in the "ſureſt road. Nothing ought now to re- "tard thy progreſs. Thou reſembleſt a "pilgrim, who wants only a ſtaff to take a "long journey. You ſee, my dear brother, "we haſten faſt toward death: when, in "the awful paſſage, our ſouls are releaſed "from mortal ties, they will take their "flight with more freedom and eaſe."

GERARD touched in the moſt ſenſible manner

manner with this loſs, followed the advice of his brother, and determined to employ himſelf wholly for the future, in the great work of his ſalvation: he quitted the world, and placed himſelf in the monaſtery of the Carthuſians, which he went to viſit when at St. Baume, with Petrarch, in 1339. The heavenly life, which theſe monks led in that awful ſolitude, had made an impreſſion upon him, which had never been effaced.

The origin of the order of the Carthuſians is thus related by Petrarch. Two brothers from Genoa, ſet out on a trading voyage; the one ſailed toward the Eaſt, the other toward the Weſt. After a number of years, one of them arriving at Genoa, being informed his brother was at Marſeilles, wrote to him to deſire his return to Genoa; but receiving no anſwer, he went to Marſeilles, and finding his brother there, he aſked him, why he did not come to Genoa?

His brother replied; "I am weary of navigation and trade: I will no longer truſt my life to the mercy of the winds; do as you pleaſe; my reſolution is fixed. I have found a port on the borders of Paradiſe, where I will reſt, and wait in tranquillity the moment of my death."

THE other, who did not comprehend this language, aſked him to explain himſelf: he returned no anſwer, but took him to Montrieu, into a deep valley, in the middle of a wood; and pointed to a houſe he had there juſt built. Struck with the awfulneſs of the ſurrounding ſcene, the other Genoeſe felt a ſudden compunction, and determined immediately to erect a building like that of his brother, on a neighbouring hill. They bade adieu to the world, and founded with their eſtates and houſes the new order of the Carthuſians; an order famous for its piety and auſterity of manners: and in this ſolitude they conſecrated the remainder

mainder of their days to God. This monaſtery of Montrieu is ſituated between Aix and Toulon, in the middle of the woods, and ſurrounded with mountains, from whence iſſue ſeveral rivers. Hence the name of Montrieu.

Though Petrarch loved his brother with tenderneſs, he was not ſorry for this change. Gerard was fond of pleaſure, and of an unſteady temper; he knew not how to moderate any of his inclinations; and this gave Petrarch a great deal of trouble and uneaſineſs, eſpecially in a city like Avignon. "I acknowledge, ſays Petrarch, the hand of God in this converſion. None but himſelf could work ſo great a change." Petrarch had conceived a very high idea of the Carthuſians. "This order does not, ſays he, reſemble others: none enter into it by force or ſeduction." Gerard was no ſooner fixed in this monaſtery, than he wrote to his brother to induce him to

take the ſame reſolution, Petrarch, filled with piety and remorſe, was ſtaggered; but he did not comply. Pope Clement the VI. gave Gerard an abſolution when in the article of death.

THE Biſhop of Rhodes, whoſe name was Bernard Albi, and who had been appointed Cardinal after the exaltation of Clement, came at this time to Avignon, and was much delighted with the converſation of Petrarch. After his return to Italy, he ſent him a letter full of ſublime queſtions on the moſt abſtracted ſubjects of philoſophy. Petrarch replies thus:

"YOUR queſtions are an ample proof of your great penetration. To queſtion and to doubt with judgment, is a great part of our knowledge. The manner in which you confeſs your ignorance, conſoles me for my own: and was not this the

the caſe, my occupations, the exceſſive heats, the tumult of this crouded city, leave me a little time for writing."

"You would have me meaſure the heavens, the earth, and the ſeas; I, who know not of what kind of clay my own body is formed, or the nature of the ſoul, which is confined in it as in a priſon, ſhall I dive into the ſyſtems of Ptolemy? or decypher the characters which the Sicilian Geometrician drew on the unfortunate ſoil? Alas! Death purſues me with eager ſteps; and all my aim is to ſteal a few moments from his graſp. I ſhall therefore only ſay in anſwer to your queſtions; that there are ſeven planets; and that the ſun holds the firſt rank: his rays re-animate the world; he begins his courſe in the Eaſt, and when he ſets, a cold ſhade is ſpread over the earth. The fixed ſtars make their revolutions alſo by a motion not viſible to us. It is diſputed whether the ſun is

placed in the centre of the world: but would it not be better to ſeek this centre where virtue dwells? Men form calculations, how much larger it is than the earth; and they neglect to examine how much more noble the ſoul is than the body."

"THE moon ſhines with the light it borrows from the ſun; its motions are periodical. Mercury is an inconſtant planet, and its influences are various: we know all this, but we neglect to inquire whether proſperity is a good or evil; by whom, and in what caſes, death is to be deſired or feared. Your courier is in haſte, and I would rather ſend him back with nothing, than give him many lines of which I ſhould be aſhamed. I cannot explain to you my aſtoniſhment, when I ſaw that deluge of verſes, which your letter poured in upon me. I undertook to count them, but in vain. What a pity, that Virgil poſſeſſed not this happy

faculty? he would not have paſſed his whoſe life in compoſing a poem, which at laſt he left imperfect. Your queſtions reſemble the enigma of the Sphinx; and you muſt ſeek another Oedipus to anſwer them."

Borlaam the Greek monk, of whom mention has been already made, came this year to Avignon: he had been much chagrined by a deciſion given againſt him by the patriarch of Conſtantinople, in a diſpute he had held with the monks of Mount Athos. Theſe monks maintained that the light which appeared on mount Tabor, at the transfiguration of Jeſus Chriſt, was uncreated; and that it was God himſelf. The Greeks made a ſerious affair of this fanciful opinion, and were contending for the truth of it with vehemence, while the Turks were at their gates, and had formed as it were a barrier round Conſtantinople, of the cities they had taken in Aſia. 1343.

Petrarch

PETRARCH was glad to ſee his Greek maſter again; and as Borlaam deſired an eſtabliſhment in Italy, Petrarch by his ſolicitations and his credit procured him the Biſhopric of Geraci, which being a ſuffragan, or ſubſidiary biſhopric depending on Rheggio, the revenue was ſmall; but it ſuited Borlaam, becauſe it ſettled him at the cloſe of life in his native country, where he died ten years after, in 1353.

AT the end of January 1343, there arrived an extraordinary courier at Avignon, who brought the melancholy news of the death of Robert king of Naples. This cauſed a general conſternation in that city, and throughout all Provence. This prince was ſixty years old, when, without terror, he ſaw his fleſh waſte away, his body decaying, and death taking poſſeſſion of his whole fabric. One thing alone troubled his laſt moments: this was the ſtate in which he muſt leave his

his family and his kingdom. Robert had had two children by his queen: the eldeſt died young; and the ſecond, named Charles duke of Calabria, left only two daughters, Joan and Mary.

Charobert, king of Hungary, who had ſome pretenſions to the kingdom of Naples, as the heir of Charles Martel, Robert's eldeſt brother, had two ſons. Pope John the XXII. who had decided in favour of Robert, propoſed a double marriage between theſe royal houſes: the princeſs Joan, who was the eldeſt, with Andrew the ſecond ſon; and the eldeſt ſon Lewis with Mary the ſecond daughter. Theſe marriages were celebrated with aſtoniſhing magnificence in 1333. Andrew was ſix, and Joan nine years old. And it was thought their being brought up together, would cement this union. But as might rather have been expected, it happened otherwiſe. The antipathy that Joan ſhewed for Andrew was

was ſoon remarked; the difference of their educations alone would have produced this effect.

THE Neapolitans were polite, voluptuous, gallant, and magnificent. The Hungarians, on the contrary, were vulgar, churliſh, and enemies to magnificence and pleaſure; and were looked upon at Naples as Barbarians, who could ſcarcely be treated with ſufficient contempt. Add to this, Andrew and his courtiers exaggerated in a haughty manner, their rights to the kingdom of Naples; while at the court of Joan, they ridiculed their pride, and maintained that Andrew could only reign as huſband of his queen. Robert ſaw with grief theſe conteſts, and the pre-ſentiments they raiſed in his heart, clouded his laſt moments, which would otherwiſe have been the calm evening of a bright day.

PERCEIVING that he drew near his end,

end, he aſſembled his nobles, and dictated his will in their preſence. By this will, he made Joan his grand-daughter his heir; and her ſiſter Mary was to ſucceed her. Saiche of Arragon, the ſecond wife of Robert, by whom he had no children, was a woman of capacity and virtue, to whom he would have confided the regency, and the education of his grand-daughters, had ſhe not formed a reſolution on his death to finiſh her days in a monaſtery. She had always ſo ſtrong an inclination for the cloiſter, that in 1317 ſhe attempted to ſet aſide her marriage, to throw herſelf into a convent. But Pope John the XXII. to whom ſhe applied, told her this intention was a ſnare of the devil. Robert named her however at the head of a council for the adminiſtration, till the princeſſes were twenty-five years old: and Philip de Cabaſſole was one of this council.

After this, Robert deſired they would bring

bring to him the two young perſons he had named for his ſucceſſors. He addreſſed himſelf to them with the greateſt dignity and tenderneſs; diſcovered to them the dangers which threatened them; and informed them in what manner they ought to conduct themſelves towards their enemies, their friends, and their ſubjects. At a moment when other men can ſcarcely ſupport themſelves, this great King ſeemed wholly intereſted in the good of his family; and the wiſdom, ſtrength, and preſence of mind he ſhewed on this occaſion, ſurpriſed and overwhelmed with grief thoſe who were preſent. Obſerving thoſe who ſtood round his bed melted into tears, he reproached them for it in a gentle manner. "What is the reaſon of your grief? ſaid he. My death has nothing in it mournful or unhappy; on the contrary, it is greatly for my advantage. I leave a frail throne, for an everlaſting kingdom. Have I not lived long enough? I have almoſt at-

tained the period that nature herſelf ſeems to have fixed to the life of man. Inſtead of afflicting yourſelves, my children, rejoice with me in my felicity."

After having ſaid this, he diſcourſed to them upon death with ſo much eloquence and philoſophy; he painted it in ſuch ſoft and agreeable colours, that thoſe who were preſent confeſſed, it no longer appeared ſo terrible an event, and that the end of a dying ſage, like Robert, was preferable to the ſchool of the greateſt philoſopher. After having ſettled all his affairs with the ſame calm deliberation as if he was juſt going to ſet out for the country, he addreſſed himſelf to God, and delivered up his ſoul into the hands of its Maker, without one ſigh or tear, or ſhewing the leaſt mark of weakneſs on account of its ſeparation from his body. "He died, ſays Petrarch, as he lived, acting and ſpeaking like himſelf." He choſe to die in the habit of the third

order

order of St. Francis, an act of zeal at that time in faſhion.

PETRARCH was at Avignon, when he received the news of king Robert's death. He ſet out immediately for Vaucluſe, to lament in ſilence and ſolitude ſo irreparable a loſs. Some time after, he writes thus to Barbatus of Sulmone:

"ALAS! nothing can equal my loſs! Who now ſhall be my adviſer, my protector, my ſupport? To whom ſhall I devote my genius and my ſtudies? Who ſhall revive my hopes, and draw my ſoul out of its lethargy? I had two guides, two protectors; and death has deprived me of both in the courſe of one year. For my firſt and deareſt friend, I ſhed the tears of affection on the boſom of Lelius. For the ſecond, I weep with you, and ſhall for ever weep. I, who have been accuſtomed to conſole others, know not how to conſole myſelf. I ſend you

you theſe few lines from that retreat where my ſoul ſeeks refuge in all its troubles."

Petrarch ſome time after this, at the deſire of a Neapolitan nobleman, made the following epitaph on king Robert:

"Here lies the body of king Robert; his ſoul is in heaven. He was the glory of kings; the honour of his age; the chief of warriors; and the beſt of men. Skilful in the art of war, he loved peace. If he had lived longer, Jeruſalem and Sicily, under his ſtandard, would have ſhaken off the yoke of the Barbarians, and driven out the tyrants. Theſe two kingdoms have loſt their hope in loſing their king. His genius equalled his valour: he unravelled the holy myſteries; he read the events of Heaven; he underſtood the virtues of plants; all nature was open before him. The Muſes and the Arts mourn their

protector. Nothing was kinder than his manners: his heart was the temple of patience. All the virtues lie buried in his tomb. No one can praiſe him as he deſerves: but fame ſhall make him immortal."

PETRARCH had reaſon to regret a prince, who had conferred upon him ſo many favours; and who had ſo great a reliſh for his works, that ſtealing ſometimes from his ſerious occupations, he paſſed many hours of the night in reading them, without thinking either of food or ſleep.

PETRARCH, after lamenting this friend many days in the ſilence and gloom of his retreat, came back to Avignon, where he paſſed a great part of the winter; making only now and then ſhort viſits to Vaucluſe.

1344. PETRARCH being at Avignon ſome time

time after this, met with Laura at a public aſſembly: her dreſs was magnificent; but in particular ſhe had ſilk gloves, brocaded with gold. A rare ornament at that time, when ſilk was ſo ſcarce in Languedoc and in Provence, that the Senechal of Beaucaire, two years after this, ſent twelve pounds to queen Joan of Burgundy, which coſt him ſeventy-ſix French livres a pound. Laura happened to drop one of theſe gloves. Petrarch, whoſe eyes were ever bent towards her, immediately picked it up. Laura perceiving it in his hands, took it from him inſtantly. And though Petrarch had the ſtrongeſt deſire to retain this precious ornament, he had not the power. If the nobility of Laura had not been proved by the contract of her marriage, it would have been by theſe embroidered gloves. For in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, none but perſons of quality in France were allowed to wear ſilk, gold, furs, pearls,

and precious jewels. This was obſerved at Avignon. And none but the relations of the Pope, the wives and daughters of the Marſhals, Barons, Viguiers, and the ladies of noble birth in this city, were exempted from this ſumptuary law. Avignon however by its commerce with ſtrangers, had long loſt the ſimplicity of its manners, which till then it had been famous for: their extravagance increaſed with their wealth, and the wives of citizens aimed as much as poſſible to vie with the ladies of noble rank in their luxury and expence.

UNDER the pontificate of Clement the VI. profuſion and debauchery were carried to the utmoſt height at Avignon. The generoſity of this Pontiff was unbounded; and he had the ſtrongeſt attachment to the fair ſex, who had free acceſs at all hours to his palace. At the head of theſe ladies, who formed a court in the palace of Clement, was the Viſcounteſs

counteſs of Turenne. As ſhe acted a conſiderable part in the pontificate of Clement, and was the particular object of Petrarch's averſion, a ſhort deſcription of her may not be diſagreeable.

The name of this lady was Cicily; ſhe was daughter of the Count de Commenges, who had eſpouſed the daughter and heir of Reymond, Viſcount of Turenne. She married the ſon of Alphonſo the IV. king of Arragon, and became Viſcounteſs of Turenne, by the death of her brother, in the year 1340. She was a woman of infinite cunning, and proud, and imperious to exceſs. It was eaſy for ſuch a character to influence the mind of Clement, who was a man of the moſt gentle temper, and the eaſieſt to govern. The empire ſhe obtained over him, and the authority with which ſhe diſpoſed of every thing in his court, have cauſed many to ſuſpect, that ſhe was his miſtreſs. It is certain ſhe made

herſelf very agreeable to him as a companion; accumulated a great deal of wealth, and diſhonoured herſelf by the avidity, with which ſhe received money from all hands, without diſtinction.

It is not ſurpriſing, that under the government of a woman, who thought of nothing but amaſſing wealth; and in a court, filled with young perſons of both ſexes, who held the firſt places there, and had no curb to their deſires; debauchery ſhould wholly prevail and become univerſal. Petrarch draws two pictures of this terrible licentiouſneſs. In his letters called the Myſteries, one of theſe deſcriptions is as follows:

"All that they ſay of Aſſyrian and Egyptian Babylon, of the four Labyrinths, of the Avernian, and Tartarian Lakes, are nothing in compariſon of this hell. We have here a Nim-

a Nimrod powerful on the earth, and a mighty hunter before the Lord, who attempts to ſcale heaven with raiſing his ſuperb towers: a Semiramis with her quiver; a Cambyſes more extravagant than the Cambyſes of old. You may here behold the inflexible Minos; Rhodomanthus; the greedy Cerberus; Paſiphae, and the Minotaur. All that is vile and execrable is aſſembled in this place. There is no clue to lead you out of this labyrinth, neither that of Dedalus, nor Ariadne: the only means of eſcaping, is by the influence of gold. Gold pacifies the moſt ſavage monſters, ſoftens the hardeſt hearts, pierces through the flinty rock, and opens every door, even that of heaven: for to ſay all in one word, even Jeſus Chriſt is here bought with gold."

"In this place reign the ſucceſſors of poor fiſhermen, who have forgot their origin. They march covered with gold

and purple, proud of the ſpoils of princes and of the people. Inſtead of thoſe little boats, in which they gained their living on the lake of Genaſerath, they inhabit ſuperb palaces. They have likewiſe their parchments, to which are hung pieces of lead; and theſe they uſe as nets to catch the innocent and unwary, whom they fleece and burn to ſatisfy their gluttony."

"To the moſt ſimple repaſts have ſucceeded the moſt ſumptuous feaſts; and where the apoſtles went on foot covered only with ſandals, are now ſeen inſolent Satrapes mounted on horſes ornamented with gold, and champing golden bits. They appear like the kings of Perſia, or the Parthian princes, to whom all muſt pay adoration."

"POOR old fiſhermen! For whom have you laboured? For whom have you cultivated the field of the Lord? For whom

whom have you ſhed ſo much of your blood? Neither piety, charity, nor truth is here. God is deſpiſed, the laws trampled upon, and wickedneſs is eſteemed wiſdom. Oh times! Oh manners!"

Petrarch did not ſatirize the vices of others alone; he compoſed ſome reflections at this time, which unfold his own character, and the failings to which it was ſubject. Theſe reflections are put in the form of dialogues, in imitation of the confeſſions of St. Auguſtin.

Augustin was Petrarch's favourite ſaint. "When I read his confeſſions, ſays Petrarch, I think I read my own; for I find in them the hiſtory of my life. At night, when my ſoul is freed from care, I lay myſelf down in bed as in a tomb, and ſummon my heart before me. Its reſtleſſneſs and diſtraction, its dread of death, its hatred of vice, and yet unequal

equal progreſs in virtue and purity; from whence come all theſe things?"

"THEY ariſe, replies Auguſtin, from your light and careleſs diſpoſition. You perceive your errors, but you do not ſeek a better path to walk in: you behold your peril, but take no pains to avoid it."

"How abſurd is that vanity of mind produced by your wit, knowledge, eloquence, and beauty! What is there in theſe things, on which to build your pride? How many times has your wit failed you? In the arts, how much more ſkilful than you are the moſt vulgar of mankind, and the ſmalleſt animals in the creation? Compare your knowledge with your ignorance, and it will appear like a ſmall brook by the ſide of the ocean. Your eloquence, what is it? A wind, a puff, an empty noiſe! Did you feel in the midſt of the loudeſt praiſes, that you wanted the greateſt of all, the applauſe

applauſe of your own mind? What folly to neglect the moſt important things in life, to occupy yourſelf in arranging ſyllables? Under this reſtraint, how many objects are there in nature, to which you cannot do juſtice? How many ſentiments in philoſophy you are not able to expreſs, becauſe you are tied down to meaſures, and fail in the number of your words? The Greeks and the Latins, have they not mutually reproached each other for this poverty of language?"

"As to your body, your health, your complexion, your features, can any thing be more frail, or leſs to be depended on? The ſmalleſt accident, the ſting of a gnat, a breath of corrupted air, will cauſe them to wither and decay. Beauty is a flower which often fades before noon. And was not this the caſe, only repreſent to yourſelf, how that body will appear

appear a few years hence, when committed to the ſilent grave."

"As to your avarice: while you lived in your ſolitude, content with a plain garb, the fruits of your trees, and the herbs of your garden, you wanted nothing, and paſſed a ſweet and tranquil life. Now example has altered your taſte, and you have the diſturbed air of thoſe, who are always ſeeking after what they can never obtain. It is commendable to be active in procuring a comfortable livelihood, but bounds ſhould be fixed to our deſires. What are yours?" "I aſk nothing ſuperfluous, replied Petrarch, aſtoniſhed that avarice ſhould be laid to his charge, but I would want for nothing. I have no ambition to command, but I would not chuſe to obey." "This, ſays St. Auguſtin, is the object of the greateſt kings, but they have failed in accompliſhing it: and thoſe who command whole nations, have themſelves been

been forced to obey. Virtue alone can procure that independence, which is the end of human wiſhes."

"As to your ambition."—"How! interrupted Petrarch, to flee courts and cities, to bury one's ſelf among rocks and woods, to combat vulgar opinions, to hate and deſpiſe honours, to laugh at thoſe who ſeek, and all their methods of obtaining them, is this to be ambitious?"—"You are not, I will grant, replied St. Auguſtin, born ambitious; and nature is not be forced: but examine your own heart. It is not honours that you hate, but the ſteps neceſſary in this age to obtain them. Your rout to them is more ſecret, but has the ſame end. You muſt own that this is the real aim of all your ſtudies. The man who ſets out on a journey to Rome, but turns back intimidated by the length of the way, it is not Rome that diſpleaſes him, but the road that leads to it."

"ENVY, gluttony, and wrath, continued St. Auguſtin, I cannot ſeriouſly reproach you with; but you cannot vindicate yourſelf from the charge of incontinence: and when you have prayed to be delivered from every licentious paſſion, you have prayed as too many do, in this manner: 'Lord, make me chaſte, but not too ſoon. Wait a little, I beſeech thee, till my youth is paſſed, and the ſeaſon of pleaſure is over. The time will come, when I ſhall have no inclination to vice, and when ſatiety and diſguſt will prevent all danger of a relapſe.' To aſk in ſuch a manner, is indeed to aſk in vain."

ST. AUGUSTIN next ſpeaks of that unſettled and diſcordant humour to which Petrarch was ſubject, and which delights to dwell on the dark ſide, and is always diſturbing and tormenting itſelf. "Men are loſt to peace, continues he, becauſe they know not the difficulties which attend the

ſituations of others, or feel the advantages of their own. Hence ariſe the complaints of the whole world." "I know well, replied Petrarch, that in elevated ſtations, we in vain ſeek for peace and tranquility of ſoul. I am ſatisfied with my fortune, but I am obliged to live for others, and comply with their humours: this dependence is my miſery."

"And who then, ſaid St. Auguſtin, in this world, lives only for himſelf? Even Cæſar, after he had ſubdued the univerſe, did not he live for others? with all his art, he could not ſatisfy the deſires, or over-rule the power of thoſe, who conſpired againſt him. Nothing but wiſdom can inſure an independence like this."

Petrarch next complains to St. Auguſtin of the life he leads at Avignon. "I am fatigued, ſays he, beyond all expreſſion, with this noiſy dirty city; it is the gulph of all naſtineſs and vice, a collection

lection of narrow ill built ſtreets, where one cannot take a ſingle ſtep without meeting with filthy pigs; barking dogs; chariots which ſtun one with the rattling of their wheels; ſets of horſes in capariſon which block up the way; disfigured beggars, terrible to look at; ſtrange faces from all the countries upon earth; inſolent nobles drunk with pleaſure and debauch; and an unruly populace always quarrelling and fighting." To this the ſaint anſwers: "if the tumult of your ſoul would ſubſide, you would no longer complain of theſe outward noiſes, which affect only the ſenſes. When the mind is calm, the confuſion of objects around us, is no more to our ear than the murmurs of a running ſtream. In this happy ſtate of ſoul, neither the clouds which fly around her, nor even the thunder that rolls over her head, is able to diſturb her ſerenity. Safe in the port, ſhe beholds but feels not the ſhipwreck."

"But

"But I have yet only attacked the diſorders you are willing to confeſs; more delicate and deeper wounds lie behind. When I conſider your extreme ſenſibility, I dare hardly attempt to probe them. Petrarch! you are bound with two golden chains; and your greateſt unhappineſs is, you are ſo dazzled by the luſtre of them both, that you do not perceive your fetters; theſe chains are love and glory; theſe are your treaſures, your delights: let us examine this matter, and firſt treat of love. Do you not allow that it is a great folly?"

"The object of our love, replied Petrarch, muſt decide this: love is the moſt noble, or the moſt deſpicable of all the paſſions; miſery, if the object is unamiable: but to be attached to a virtuous woman, who deſerves both love and reſpect, this appears to me a great felicity. If you think otherwiſe, I am ſorry for it. Every one has his own opinion; if this is

an error, it is dear to me, and I ſhould be ſorry to be deprived of it. You know not the object of this love!"

"INDEED I do, replied St. Auguſtin; a mortal, a woman is the cauſe; I know you have paſſed a great part of your life in admiring and adoring her. A folly ſo long perſiſted in, aſtoniſhes me."

"I BESEECH you, returned Petrarch, no invectives. Thais and Livia were women, but what a difference between them and the perſon of whom you ſpeak: know that her manners are a perfect model of the pureſt virtue: little attracted by the pleaſures of the world, ſhe ſighs after heaven, as her only reward." "What a madneſs, returned the ſaint! you have nouriſhed this flame in your heart ſixteen years. The war of Hannibal in Italy was not ſo long, nor the flames he kindled more violent, than yours. He was driven

out at laſt; but who ſhall drive away that Hannibal who lays waſte your ſoul."

"Blind as you are, you love your diſeaſe, and you feed it; but liſten to me: when death ſhall extinguiſh thoſe eyes, which delight you now; when you ſhall behold that beautiful face disfigured and pale, and thoſe perfect limbs motionleſs and livid; then will you bluſh for having attached an immortal ſoul to a decayed and periſhable body:"

"God preſerve me, reſumed Petrarch, from beholding ſo terrible a diſaſter; it would be reverſing the order of nature. I came firſt into the world, and it would be unjuſt I ſhould go out of it the laſt. It is not however, ſaid St. Auguſtin, an impoſſible event; in as much as this beautiful perſon, which is the object of your love, and which is worn out by frequent confinements, has already loſt much of its ſtrength and brilliancy."

"LEARN, replied Petrarch, that it is not the perſon of Laura I adore, but that ſoul ſo ſuperior to all others: her conduct and her manners, are an image of the life the bleſſed lead in heaven. If I ſhould ever loſe her, (the very idea makes me tremble!) I would ſay, what Lelius the wiſeſt of the Romans ſaid on the death of Scipio, I loved her virtue, and that ſhall ever live."

"IT is not eaſy, returned the ſaint, to force you out of your intrenchment: for a moment I will therefore allow, that this woman for whom you languiſh is a ſaint, a goddeſs, the goddeſs of virtue herſelf, if you will have it ſo. You are then the more culpable, if your inclinations toward her are not pure and honeſt. I take heaven to witneſs, replied Petrarch, that there was never any thing diſhoneſt in my affections for Laura, never any thing reprehenſible in them but their exceſs. I wiſh all the world could ſee my

my love with as much clearneſs as they can her face. It reſembles it; it is like that face, pure and without ſpot. I am going to ſay a thing that will perhaps aſtoniſh you."

"It is to Laura I owe what I am. Never ſhould I have attained my preſent reputation and glory; if the ſentiments with which ſhe inſpired me, had not raiſed thoſe ſeeds of virtue, which nature had planted in my ſoul: ſhe drew me out of thoſe ſnares and precipices, into which the ardour of youth had plunged me. In fine, ſhe pointed out my road to heaven, and ſerved me as a guide to purſue it. The effect of love is to tranſform the lover; and to aſſimilate him to the object beloved. What then more virtuous, more perfect than Laura? In a city, where no one is reſpected, where no character is held ſacred; has calumny dared to aſſault her? have they found any thing reprehenſible, I ſay not only in her

actions, but even in her words, in her countenance, or in her geſtures. Thoſe bad mouths which poiſon all, have they dared to taint her life with their peſtiferous breath? No; they could not even forbear reſpecting and admiring it. Inflamed with the deſire of enjoying, like her, a great reputation, I have forced through all the obſtacles that oppoſed it: in the flower of my age, I loved her alone, I wiſhed to pleaſe her alone. You know all that I have done, and all that I have ſuffered to accompliſh this end. To her I have ſacrificed thoſe pleaſures for which I felt the greateſt inclination; and you would have me forget and renounce her. No, nothing can ever determine me to ſuch a ſacrifice; it is to no purpoſe for you to attempt. How many errors! ſaid the ſaint, how many illuſions! you ſay you owe to Laura what you are; that ſhe has cauſed you to quit the world, and has elevated you to the contemplation of celeſtial things. But the truth

is this: full of confidence and a good opinion of yourſelf, entirely occupied with one perſon in whom your whole ſoul is abſorbed, you deſpiſe the reſt of the world, and the world in return deſpiſes you. It is true ſhe has drawn you out of ſome vices; but ſhe has alſo prevented the growth of many virtues. In tears and complaints you have ſpent that time, which ſhould have been devoted to God. The beſt effect of this affection, is perhaps to have rendered you eager after glory: we ſhall preſently examine how much you are indebted to her on this account. As to every thing elſe, I ventue to declare that ſhe has been your deſtruction in nouriſhing a paſſion ſhe ought to have ſuppreſſed. She has filled you with the love of the creature, rather than the Creator; and this is the death of the ſoul."

" You ſay ſhe has raiſed you to the love of God. It may be ſo. But in this

you have inverted the order of nature. The Creator is to be firſt loved for his own ſake, for his infinite goodneſs and perfection; and then the creature as his work, and in proportion to its reſemblance to him. You have done the contrary. You have loved God as a good artificer, who has made what you thought the fineſt object in the world."

"I TAKE Heaven to witneſs, again replied Petrarch, of what I before advanced, that it is the ſoul of Laura, and not her perſon, that I love. Of this I can give you the moſt inconteſtible proof. The older ſhe grows, the more does my affection for her increaſe. Even in her ſpring, her charms began to fade; but the beauties of her mind, and my paſſion, increaſed together."

"IF that ſoul, reſumed St. Auguſtin, had inhabited a vile and ugly body, would you have loved it then?"

"THE

"THE body, ſaid Petrarch, is the image and the mirror of the ſoul; if the beauty of the ſoul could be immediately perceived without the interpoſition of the body, I ſhould love a beautiful ſoul though placed in a diſfigured perſon."

"IF, replied St. Auguſtin, you love what falls under your ſenſes only, it is ſtill the body which you love. I do not deny, that it was the beauty of the ſoul which nouriſhed and kept up your paſſion, but it did not give birth to it. You loved the body with the ſoul, and the heat of youth led you to inclinations even for Laura, which her virtue alone ſubdued. Did ſhe not herſelf tell you in one of thoſe exceſſes, 'I am not, Petrarch, the perſon you take me for?' In your commendations of Laura, you have often condemned yourſelf."

"I WILL with joy acknowledge, returned Petrarch, her virtue and my own folly;

folly; but if my deſires have ever paſſed the bounds which honour preſcribes, it is no longer ſo; thoſe limits are now ſacred. With reſpect to Laura, let me ever do her this juſtice; I never ſaw her virtue ſtagger in the moſt intereſting moments of our connexion; and in the gayeſt hours of her life, her conduct was always uniform, always pure. How admirable is a conſtancy, a reſolution ſo ſuperior to the generality of her ſex!"

"You cannot deny, ſaid the Saint, and have indeed confeſſed, that this love of yours has made you unhappy, and was near drawing on you a fatal crime. This admirable woman was the cauſe of all this: and ought ſhe not rather to have ſuppreſſed than encouraged an inclination ſo fatal to your peace? She ought to have known and impreſſed this truth upon you; That of all the paſſions to which human nature is ſubject, love is the moſt to be feared. It makes us forget ourſelves,

ſelves, and it leads us to forget our God. Every thing ſerves to nouriſh and increaſe it; and thoſe wretched mortals whom it holds in bondage, carry a fire within them which will finally conſume both ſoul and body. It is unneceſſary to ſay more; thoſe who have experienced this paſſion will feel I ſpeak truth; thoſe who have never known it, will give me no credit. But you are not one of theſe."

"Alas! returned Petrarch, I am not able to anſwer you, and I muſt give myſelf up to deſpair!"

"No, ſaid the Saint, before you do this, you muſt make every effort. Conſult the beſt poets and philoſophers. Cicero adviſes to change the object of love, or divide it; like a king of Perſia, who to weaken the current of the Ganges, cut this river into ſeveral ſtreams. But I would not have you take this method. It is better to die an honeſt death, than to live an infamous life; to be devoted to one

one honourable, than many diſgraceful objects. You have tried abſence, but it was liberty and curioſity that were your chief motives. Theſe ſent you to the North, and the South, and to the extremities of the ocean; theſe were the foundation of your retreat at Vaucluſe. But travelling does more harm than good, to thoſe who carry their diſeaſes along with them; and one might apply to you in this ſituation, the anſwer of Socrates to a young man, who complained of the little uſe he had derived from his travels: That is, ſaid Socrates, becauſe you travelled with yourſelf. For thoſe who would travel with ſucceſs, muſt have the mind rightly prepared: and without this preparation, in vain will be its courſe though extended from pole to pole. As Horace ſays, It will change its climate, but never alter its ſentiments. To exchange your ſituation to advantage, you muſt lay down the burden that oppreſſes you,

you, nor like Orpheus ever look behind you."

"You love Italy: it was there you received your life. No ſituation can ſuit you better; no ſituation is ſo delightful. Recollect the beauty of the ſkies, the ſea, and the mountains; call to mind the agreeable manners of its inhabitants. You have been too long abſent from this your native country: it is growing late; the night of life is coming on. Above all things remember, that ſolitude is fatal to you, and that the rocks and woods of Vaucluſe are ſo many ſnares to your ſoul."

"Enter into yourſelf. Be not diſguſted with age, which is approaching: or afraid of death that will ſucceed it. Time paſſes away, and the body decays; but the mind is incorruptible, and its maturity can never be determined. With reaſon has it been ſaid, that one ſoul re-

quired many bodies. Conſider then the nobleneſs of this your ſoul, the frailty of your body, the ſhortneſs of life, and the certainty of death. Recall the torments you have ſuffered; the uſeleſs tears you have ſhed: and the ſhort pleaſures you have obtained, which may be compared to thoſe light zephyrs of the ſummer which refreſh the air but for a moment. Reflect on the duties you have neglected, and the works you have begun, and yet never compleated. Finally, let your prayers be fervent and ſincere, that God would hear you, that he would ſtrengthen your mind, and aſſiſt you with his grace."

"THIS is all I have to ſay upon the head of love. As to glory, which is founded upon fame, what is it? Words, which paſs through the mouths of mortals, and vaniſh into air! What is it but a wind blown up by their frail breath! How many obſtacles are there to an immortal

mortal name! Faſhion, which changes every day, and gives to the moderns the preference over the antients; envy, which purſues the greateſt men even after death; the humour of the vulgar, who neither love men of genius, nor truth herſelf; the ignorance and inconſtancy of men's judgments; in fine, the ruin of ſepulchres and monuments, which you elegantly call the ſecond death. And can this be glory, which depends upon the duration of marble? Even books, more durable than monuments, are they not ſubject to a thouſand accidents? They have, like us, their old age and death; and with this oblivion are the moſt celebrated men threatened. In reality the true honour of man is virtue: and glory is only her ſhadow; it follows her every where, and the leſs it is ſought, the more certainly is it obtained. If the earth is but a ſpeck, and if God fills both ſpace and time, why do vain mortals waſte their ſhort moments in ſuch an empty

empty purſuit? Was you aſſured but of one more year of life, would not you manage it with extreme œconomy? Alas! men are avaricious of a certain, and prodigal of an uncertain time. They are not ſure of a day, an hour, a minute, yet they ſet about employments of great extent, and little uſe. Thouſands, intoxicated with this folly, die in the flower of their age, and in the midſt of their projects. With one foot in heaven, and the other upon the earth, they fall into the grave. Thus do you conſume your time in making books, and neglect important duties to run after vain deſires. Thus you purſue a ſhadow, and neglect your ſoul."

"ABANDON theſe things. The exploits of the Romans have been ſufficiently celebrated; they do not need your praiſe. Leave Africa, and your Scipio; you can add nothing to his glory."

"BE yourſelf once again, prepare for death, and for the life that is to come."

THUS end theſe excellent dialogues.

IN September 1343, the Pope, who had formed a high idea of Petrarch's abilities entruſted him with a negociation, the execution of which required both judgment and penetration. It has been obſerved, that Robert king of Naples had eſtabliſhed a regency till his granddaughter attained the age of twenty-five years. The Pope, on his ſide, claimed the government of Naples, during this minority; and on this account ſent Petrarch to aſſert his right, and inform himſelf of what was paſſing in that court. The influence of Cardinal Colonna no doubt contributed to the obtaining this commiſſion for Petrarch. The Cardinal had friends, who were unjuſtly detained in priſon at Naples, and whoſe freedom he had ſolicited; and he flattered himſelf

that Petrarch's eloquence and interceſſion would obtain their enlargement.

PETRARCH went by land to Nice, where he embarked, and in his paſſage was near being loſt. He wrote to Cardinal Colonna the following account of his voyage:

"I EMBARKED at Nice, the firſt maritime town in Italy; at night I got to Monaco; and the bad weather obliged me to paſs a whole day there; this did not put me into humour. The next morning we re-embarked, and after being toſſed all day by the tempeſt, we arrived very late at Port Maurice. The night was dreadful; it was not poſſible to get to the caſtle; and I was obliged to put up at a village ale-houſe, where my bed and ſupper appeared tolerable from extreme wearineſs and hunger. I determined to proceed by land; the perils of the road were leſs dreadful to me than thoſe

thoſe of the ſea. I left my ſervants and baggage in the ſhip, which ſet ſail, and I remained with only one domeſtic on ſhore."

"By accident, among the rocks towards the coaſt of Genoa I found ſome German horſes, which were for ſale: they were ſtrong and ſerviceable. I bought them; but I was ſoon after obliged to take ſhip again, for war was renewed between the Piſans and the people of Milan. Nature has placed limits to theſe ſtates, the Po on one ſide, and the Appenines on the other; but pride and avarice know no bounds. I muſt have paſſed between their two armies if I had gone by land; this obliged me to re-embark at Lerici. I paſſed by Corvo that famous rock, the ruins of the city of Luna, and I landed at Murrona. From thence I went the next day on horſeback to Piſa, Sienna, and Rome. My eagerneſs to execute your orders has

made me a night-traveller, contrary to my character and diſpoſition. I would not ſleep till I had paid my duty to your illuſtrious father, who is always my hero. I found him juſt the ſame I left him ſeven years ago; nay even as hale and ſprightly as when I firſt ſaw him at Avignon, which is now twelve years. What a ſurpriſing man! What majeſty! What ſtrength of mind and body! How firm his voice, how beautiful his face! Had he been a few years younger, I ſhould have taken him for Julius Cæſar, or Scipio Africanus. Rome grows old, but not its hero. He was half undreſſed, and going into bed; I ſtaid then only a moment, but I paſſed the whole of the next day with him. He aſked me a thouſand queſtions about you; and was much pleaſed I was going to Naples. He would accompany me when I ſet out from Rome, beyond its walls. I went to Paleſtrina that night, and was kindly received there by John Colonna. This

is

is a young man of great hopes, who follows the ſteps of his anceſtors."

"I ARRIVED at Naples the 11th of October. Heavens! what a change has the death of one man produced in this place! No one would know it now. Religion, juſtice, truth, are baniſhed. I think I am at Memphis, Babylon, or Mecca. In the place of a King, ſo good, ſo juſt, and ſo pious; a little Monk, fat, roſy, bare-footed, with a ſhorn head, and half covered with a dirty mantle; bent by hypocriſy more than by age, loſt in debauchery, proud of his poverty, and ſtill prouder of the gold he has amaſſed; this man holds the reins of this ſtaggering empire. His cruelty and his debauches go beyond even thoſe of Dionyſius, Agathocles, and Phalaris. The name of this Monk is Brother Robert; he was an Hungarian Cordelier, and Preceptor of Prince Andrew, whom he entirely governed. This monſter oppreſſes

the weak, deſpiſes the great, tramples juſtice under foot, and treats the two Queens with the greateſt inſolence. The court and the city tremble before him. A mournful ſilence reigns in the public aſſemblies; and in private houſes, they converſe by whiſpers. The leaſt geſture is puniſhed, and to think is imputed a crime."

"How terrible for me to negociate with ſuch a man! I have preſented to him the orders of the ſovereign Pontiff, and your juſt demands: he behaved with an inſolence I cannot deſcribe; Suſa, or Damaſcus the capital of the Saracens, would have received with more reſpect an envoy from the holy See. The great lords imitate his pride and tyranny. The Biſhop of Cavaillon is the only one who oppoſes this torrent: but what can one lamb do in the midſt of ſo many wolves? It is the requeſt of a dying king alone that makes him endure ſo wretched a ſituation.

How

How ſmall are the hopes of my negociation! But I ſhall wait with patience, though I know before-hand the anſwer they will give me."

Petrarch repreſents Queen Joan as a woman of weak underſtanding, and diſpoſed to gallantry; but incapable from her weakneſs of greater crimes. She was at this time eighteen years old, and governed by an old woman whoſe origin was from the dregs of the people. She was wife to a poor fiſherman of Catana, a town of Sicily, and was nurſe to a child of King Robert, of which his firſt wife was delivered when ſhe followed him to the ſiege of Trapani in Sicily. This woman was handſome, inſinuating, and had found out the art of pleaſing both the wives of King Robert, and the Ducheſs of Calabria the mother of Joan, who entruſted her with the education of her daughter. She was conſummate in the art of addreſs and the intrigues of a court, and ſoon

gained the heart of a young princeſs who ſought after nothing but love and pleaſure. This woman had married for her ſecond huſband a Turkiſh ſlave, whom the Seneſchal of Naples had bought of a Corſair. The Seneſchal took a liking to him, and gave him his freedom; from thence he became keeper of the King's wardrobe, in which poſt he amaſſed prodigious wealth. When he married the Cataneſe, he was made a Chevalier, and by her credit obtained the place of Seneſchal, which became vacant by the death of his maſter. She had a ſon called Robert, for whom ſhe obtained his father's place, after his death. His perſon was handſome and agreeable, and it was thought that ſhe very early procured him the good graces of the princeſs Joan. Theſe people uſed every means to oppoſe the coronation of prince Andrew, that his authority, and that of the Hungarians, might not be confirmed; and they, on their part, aimed at the deſtruction of the

the Cataneſe and her cabal. Such was the ſituation of this divided court, and it was eaſy to foreſee it muſt end in ſome tragical event.

Petrarch wearied out with the pretended conſiderations they pleaded, to retard and amuſe him, formed the project of viſiting the Mount Gargon, the port of Brindiſi, and the upper coaſt of that ſea. But the Queen Dowager begged he would not go ſo far from Naples, always ſaying to him, we muſt wait a little, perhaps the face of things may change. She permitted him however to viſit ſome places near, which he gives an account of in the following letter to Cardinal Colonna:

"I went to Baiæ with my friends Barbatus and John Barrili: every thing concurred to render this jaunt agreeable, good company, the beauty of the ſcenes, and my extreme wearineſs of the city I quitted.

quitted. This climate, which as far I can judge muſt be inſupportable in ſummer, is delightful in winter. I was rejoiced to behold places deſcribed by Virgil, and which is more ſurpriſing by Homer before him. I have ſeen the Lucrine lake, famous for its fine oyſters: the lake Avernus, the waters of which are as black as pitch, with fiſh ſwimming in it of the ſame colour: Marſhes formed by the ſtanding water of Acheron, and that mountain whoſe roots go down to hell; the horrible aſpect of this place, the thick ſhades with which it is covered by a ſurrounding wood, and the peſtilential ſmell that this water exhales, characteriſe it very juſtly as the hell of the poets. There wants only the bark of Charon, which would indeed be unneceſſary, as there is only a ſhallow ford to paſs over. The ſtyx and the kingdom of Pluto are now hid from our ſight. Awed by what I had heard and read of theſe mournful approaches to the dwellings of the dead,

I was

I was contented to view them at my feet from the top of a high mountain. The labourer, the ſhepherd, and the ſailor dare not approach them nearer. There are profound caverns, where ſome pretend much gold is concealed; covetous men, they ſay, have been to ſeek it, but they never returned; whether they loſt their way in the dark valleys, or whether they had a fancy to viſit the dead, being ſo near their habitation."

"I have ſeen the ruins of the grotto of the famous Cumean Sybil; it is a hideous rock, ſuſpended in the Avernian lake. Its ſituation ſtrikes the mind with horror; there ſtill remain the hundred mouths by which the Gods conveyed their oracles; they are dumb at preſent, and there is only one God who ſpeaks in heaven and in the earth. Theſe uninhabited ruins ſerve for the neſts of birds of unlucky omen. Not far from hence is that horrible cavern, which leads, ſay they, to hell."

Who

"WHO would believe, that close to the mansions of the dead, nature should have placed powerful remedies for the preservation of life? Near Avernus however, and Acheron, is that barren land from whence rises continually a salutary vapour, a cure for several diseases; and those hot springs which sound like the boiling of an iron pot; there are some which vomit cinders hot and sulphureous. I have seen the baths which nature has prepared, but the avarice of the physicians hath rendered them of doubtful use: this does not however prevent them from being visited by all the neighbouring towns. These hollowed mountains dazzle with the lustre of their marble arches, on which are engraved figures that point out by the position of their hands the part of the body each fountain is proper to cure."

"I SAW the foundations of that admirable reservoir of Nero, which was to go

from Mount Miſene to the Avernian lake, and incloſe all the hot waters of Baiæ."

"At Puzzoli I ſaw the mountain of Falernus, celebrated for its grapes, whence the famous Falernian wine. I ſaw likewiſe thoſe enraged waves that Virgil ſpeaks of in his Georgics, on which Cæſar put a bridle by the mole which he raiſed there, and which Auguſtus finiſhed: it is now called the dead ſea. I am ſurpriſed at the prodigious expence the Romans were at to build houſes in the moſt expoſed ſituations to ſhelter them from the ſeverities of winter; for in the heats of ſummer, the valleys of the Appenines, the mountains of Viterbe, the woods of Ombriu, Tivoli, Freſcate, &c. furniſhed them with charming ſhades: even the ruins of thoſe houſes are ſuperb. But this magnificence was little ſuited to the Roman manners, and on this account Marius, Cæſar and Pompey were praiſed for having built upon the mountains, where they were not diſturbed

turbed by the foaming of the ſea, and where they trod under foot thoſe darling pleaſures which deſtroy mankind, by rendering them effeminate. This it was that determined Scipio Africanus to ſeek a retreat at Linterno; this unparalleled hero rather choſe to flee from voluptuouſneſs than trample it under foot. I could ſee nothing that would delight me more than his abode, but I had no guide that was acquainted with its ſituation."

"OF all the wonders I ſaw in my little journey, nothing ſurpriſed me more than the prodigious ſtrength and extraordinary courage of a young woman called Mary, whom we ſaw at Puzzoli. She paſſed her life among ſoldiers, and it was a common opinion that ſhe was ſo much feared, no one dared attack her honour. No warrior but envied her proweſs and ſkill. From the flower of her age ſhe lived in camps, and adopted the military rules and dreſs. Her body is that of a

hardy ſoldier, rather than a woman, and ſeamed all over with the ſcars of honour. She is always at war with her neighbours; ſometimes ſhe attacks them with a little troop, ſometimes alone; and ſeveral have died by her hand. She is perfect in all the ſtratagems of the military art; and ſuffers, with incredible patience, hunger, thirſt, cold, heat, and fatigue. In fine, ſhe lies on the bare ground; her ſhield ſerves for her pillow, and ſhe ſleeps armed in the open air."

"I had ſeen her in my firſt voyage to Naples, about three years ago; but as ſhe was very much altered, I did not know her again. She came forward to ſalute me; I returned it as to a perſon I was not acquainted with. But by her laugh and the geſtures of thoſe about me, I ſuſpected ſomething; and obſerving her with more attention, I found under the helmet the face of this formidable virgin. Was I to inform you of half the things they

they relate of her, you would take them for fables. I will therefore confine myſelf to a few facts, to which I was witneſs. By accident, ſeveral ſtrangers who came to Puzzoli to ſee this wonder, were all aſſembled at the citadel, to make trial of her ſtrength. We found her alone, walking before the portico of the church, and not ſurpriſed at the concourſe of the people. We begged ſhe would give us a proof of her ſtrength. She excuſed herſelf at firſt as having a wound in her arm; but afterwards ſhe took up an enormous block of ſtone, and a piece of wood loaded with iron. Upon theſe, ſaid ſhe, you may try your ſtrength if you will. After every one had attempted to move them with more or leſs ſucceſs, ſhe took and threw them with ſo much eaſe over our heads, that we remained confounded, and could hardly believe our eyes. At firſt ſome deceit was ſuſpected, but there could be none. This has rendered credible

credible what the antients relate of the Amazons, and Virgil of the heroines of Italy who were headed by Camilla."

Petrarch was but juſt returned from this little journey, when the city of Naples underwent a horrible tempeſt, which was felt along the coaſts of the Mediterranean.

"A monk, who was the Biſhop of a neighbouring iſland, and held in great eſteem for his ſanctity and his ſkill in aſtrology, had foretold, that Naples was to be deſtroyed by an earthquake on the 25th of November. This prophecy ſpread ſuch terror through the city, that the inhabitants abandoned their affairs to prepare themſelves for death. Some hardy ſpirits indeed ridiculed thoſe, who betrayed marks of fear on the approach of a thunder ſtorm; and as ſoon as the ſtorm was over, jeſtingly cried out, *See, the prophecy has failed!*"

"As to myſelf, I was in a ſtate between fear and hope; but I muſt confeſs, that fear ſometimes got the aſcendant. Accuſtomed to a colder climate, and in which a thunder ſtorm in winter was a rare phœnomenon, I conſidered what I now ſaw, as a threatning from heaven."

"On the eve of the night in which the prophecy was to be fulfilled, a number of females, more attentive to the impending evil than to the decorum of their ſex, ran half-naked through the ſtreets, preſſing their children to their boſoms. They haſtened to proſtrate themſelves in the churches, which they deluged with their tears, crying out with all their might, *Have mercy, O Lord! Have mercy upon us!*"

"Moved, diſtreſſed with the general conſternation, I retired early to the convent of St. Laurence. The Monks went to reſt at the uſual hour. It was the ſeventh

venth day of the moon: and as I was anxious to obſerve in what manner ſhe would ſet, I ſtood looking at my window, till ſhe was hid from my ſight by a neighbouring mountain. This was a little before midnight. The moon was gloomy and overcaſt; nevertheleſs I felt myſelf tolerably compoſed, and went to bed. But ſcarce had I cloſed my eyes, when I was awakened by the loud rattling of my chamber windows. I felt the walls of the convent violently ſhaken from their foundations. The lamp, which I always keep lighted through the night, was extinguiſhed. The fear of death laid faſt hold upon me."

"The whole city was in commotion, and you heard nothing but lamentations, and confuſed exhortations to make ready for the dreadful event. The Monks, who had riſen to ſing their matins, terrified by the movements of the earth, ran into my chamber, armed with croſſes and

relicks, imploring the mercy of Heaven. A Prior, whoſe name was David, and who was conſidered as a ſaint, was at their head. The ſight of theſe inſpired us with a little courage. We proceeded to the church, which was already crouded; and here we remained during the reſt of the night, expecting every moment the completion of the propheey."

"IT is impoſſible to deſcribe the horrors of that night. The elements were let looſe. The noiſe of the thunder, the winds, and the rain, the roarings of the enraged ſea, the convulſions of the heaving earth, and the diſtracted cries of thoſe who felt themſelves ſtaggering on the brink of death, were dreadful beyond imagination. Never was there ſuch a night! As ſoon as we apprehended that day was at hand, the altars were prepared, and the Prieſts dreſſed themſelves for maſs. Trembling, we lifted up our eyes

eyes to heaven, and then fell proſtrate upon the earth."

"THE day at length appears. But what a day! Its horrors were more terrible than thoſe of the night. No ſooner were the higher parts of the city a little more calm, than we were ſtruck with the outcries which we heard towards the ſea. Anxious to diſcover what paſſed there, and ſtill expecting nothing but death, we became deſperate, and inſtantly mounting our horſes, rode down to the ſhore."

"HEAVENS! what a ſight! Veſſels wrecked in the harbour. The ſtrand covered with bodies, which had been daſhed againſt the rocks by the fury of the waves. Here you ſaw the brains of ſome, and the entrails of others; there the palpitating ſtruggles of yet remaining life. You might diſtinguiſh the groans of the men and the ſhrieks of the women, even through the noiſe of the thunder, the

roaring of the billows, and the crash of the falling houſes. The ſea regarded not either the reſtraints of men, or the barriers of nature. She no longer knew the bounds which had been ſet by the Almighty."

"THAT immenſe mole, which ſtretching itſelf out on each hand forms the port, was buried under the tumult of the waves; and the lower parts of the city were ſo much deluged that you could not paſs along the ſtreets without danger of being drowned."

"WE found near the ſhore above a thouſand Neapolitan knights, who had aſſembled, as it were, to attend the funeral obſequies of their country. This ſplendid troop gave me a little courage. If I die, ſaid I to myſelf, it will be at leaſt in good company. Scarce had I made this reflection, when I heard a dreadful clamour every where around me. The

ſea

ſea had ſapped the foundations of the place where we ſtood, and it was at this inſtant giving way. We fled therefore immediately to a more elevated ground. Hence we beheld a moſt tremendous ſight! The ſea between Naples and Capræa was covered with moving mountains: they were neither green as in the ordinary ſtate of the ocean, nor black as in common ſtorms, but white."

"The young Queen ruſhed out of the palace, bare footed, her hair diſhevelled, and her dreſs in the greateſt diſorder. She was followed by a train of females, whoſe dreſs was as looſe and diſorderly as her own. They went to throw themſelves at the feet of the bleſſed Virgin, crying aloud, *Mercy! Mercy!*"

"Towards the cloſe of the day, the ſtorm abated, the ſea was calm, and the heavens ſerene. Thoſe who were upon the land, ſuffered only the pains of fear;

but it was otherwiſe with thoſe who were upon the water. Some Marſeilles gallies, laſt from Cyprus, and now ready to weigh anchor, were ſunk before our eyes; nor could we give them the leaſt aſſiſtance. Larger veſſels from other nations met with the ſame fate in the midſt of the harbour. Not a ſoul was ſaved!"

"THERE was a very large veſſel, which had on board four hundred criminals under ſentence of death. The mode of their puniſhment had been changed, and they were reſerved as a forlorn hope to be expoſed in the firſt expedition againſt Sicily. This ſhip, which was ſtout and well-built, ſuſtained the ſhocks of the waves till ſun-ſet: but now ſhe began to looſen and to fill with water. The criminals, who were a hardy ſet of men, and leſs diſmayed by death as they had lately ſeen him ſo near at hand, ſtruggled with the ſtorm, and by a bold and vigorous defence kept death at bay till

the

the approach of night. But their efforts were in vain. The ſhip began to ſink. Determined however to put off as far as poſſible the moment of diſſolution, they ran aloft, and hung upon the maſts and rigging. At this moment, the tempeſt was appeaſed: and theſe poor convicts were the only perſons whoſe lives were ſaved in the port of Naples, Lucan ſays, *Fortune preſerves the guilty*. And do we not find by daily experience, that lives of little moment eaſily eſcape the perils to which they are expoſed."

Petrarch wrote this letter the day after the earthquake, and concludes with the following reflections:

"I trust that this ſtorm will be a ſufficient ſecurity againſt all ſolicitations to make me riſk my life upon the ocean. This is the only thing in which I ſhall dare to be a rebel: but in this, I would not

not obey either the Pope, or even my father himſelf was he again to return upon the earth. I will leave the air to the birds, and the ſea to the fiſh; for I am a land animal, and to the land will I confine myſelf. Send me whither you pleaſe; I will go to the furtheſt Eaſt, or even round the world, provided I never quit my footing upon the earth. I know very well, the divines inſiſt there is as much danger by land as by ſea. It may be ſo. But I beſeech you to permit me there to give up my life where I firſt received it. I like that ſaying of one of the antients, *He who is ſhipwrecked a ſecond time, cannot lay the fault upon Neptune.*"

PETRARCH, in another letter to Cardinal Colonna, ſpeaks of the continual murders in the city of Naples.

"THE ſtreets, ſays he, at night are filled by young men of rank, who are armed,

armed, and attack all who paſs without diſtinction; they muſt fight or die. This evil is without remedy; neither the authority of parents, the ſeverity of the magiſtrates, nor the power of kings themſelves has been able to ſuppreſs it: but it is not ſurpriſing that ſuch actions are committed at night, when they kill one another for diverſion in open day. To theſe barbarous ſpectacles the people run in crouds, and ſhout and rejoice at the ſight of human blood; even kings and princes are amuſed by it. Young men are ſeen expiring under the eyes of their parents; and it is reckoned a ſhame not to die with a good grace, as if it was to ſerve God or their country. The place deſtined to this butchery is near the city. One day they dragged me thither. The King and Queen, with all the nobility of Naples, were aſſembled. I was dazzled by the magnificence of this aſſembly, but ignorant of the ſight I was to behold: when on a ſudden I heard a great noiſe

noiſe and ſhouting of the people: I looked toward the place from whence it came, and ſaw a young man of a very intereſting figure, covered with blood, who fell down and expired at my feet. Seized with horror, I ſet ſpurs to my horſe and fled with haſte from this infernal ſpectacle; curſing thoſe who brought me there, and the ſpectators who could be pleaſed with ſuch a horrid ſight. You will not be ſurpriſed they retain your friends in irons: when they can amuſe themſelves with the death of an innocent and amiable young man. I am tempted inſtantly to quit this barbarous place, and in three days perhaps its ſun will no longer ſhine upon me. I ſhall firſt go into Ciſalpine, and then to Tranſalpine Gaul, eager to return to a maſter who can render every thing agreeable to me but the ſea."

PETRARCH employed all his eloquence to make the Neapolitans feel the cruelty of

of theſe games, but in vain; it was not till fifty years after this that they were aboliſhed by Charles de la Poiſe, King of Naples. The ſituation of Naples was inſupportable to Petrarch: he was however much honoured by Queen Joan, who loved letters and wiſhed to attach him to her; ſhe made him her chaplain and clerk in writing, as king Robert had done. Petrarch paſſed a whole day before his departure with his friends John Barrili, and Barbatus of Sulmone whom he calls his ſecond Ovid, drunk with the nectar of Hippocrene. "They live, ſays he, a tranquil life, neither troubled with the noiſe of children, the contentions of ſervants, nor the fatigues of buſineſs."

The part of his negociation which reſpected the releaſe of priſoners, Petrarch ſucceeded in. This was afterwards the occaſion of Prince Andrew's death: they were releaſed by his intereſt; and he took them into the moſt intimate friendſhip, which rendered them

inſolent and cauſed their ruin: and Petrarch was concerned he had meddled with this affair, which proved ſo fatal in the end to the perſons concerned as well as the Prince himſelf.

BEFORE Petrarch ſet out from Naples, there was a report ſpread of his death in that part of Italy between the Alps and the Appennines: and they even mourned for him at Venice. Antoine de Beccari in rather too much haſte wrote ſome verſes on the occaſion. A ſketch of this poem will ſerve to ſhew the ſuperiority of Petrarch's genius to that of the poets who were his contemporaries. The poem is allegorical, as were moſt of the writings in that age. It repreſents a funeral proceſſion, compoſed of ſeveral ladies followed by a numerous train.

AMONG theſe Grammar appears the firſt, ſupported by Priſcian and other

maſters famed in its rules. She celebrates the pains with which Petrarch cultivated her regard from his tendereſt youth, laments extremely his loſs, and ſeems to fear there is not one Grammarian left able to fill his place. After her comes Rhetoric followed by Cicero, Geoffroy de Vineſouve, and Alain de Liſle, two Gothic authors of the twelfth and thirteenth century, who muſt be very much ſurpriſed to ſee themſelves at the ſide of Cicero. Next comes a train of hiſtorians: Livy, Suetonius, Florus, and Eutropius with his hands joined, and his face covered; followed by the Nine Muſes rending their garments, tearing their hair, and ſhowing all the ſigns of a moſt lively grief. Philoſophy appears the next in a black robe, as a widow who laments for a huſband ſhe moſt tenderly loved. Plato, Ariſtotle, Cato, and Seneca, make up her train.

Virgil,

VIRGIL, Ovid, Juvenal, Statius, Horace, Lucretius, Perſius, Gallus, and Lucan ſupport the bier, and depoſite the body in the Mauſoleum of Parnaſſus, which had not been opened for ſeveral centuries. Minerva cloſes this proceſſion, bringing from heaven the crown of Petrarch, which ſhe had in her poſſeſſion, and which ſhe places in a ſacred wood of pines, where it may be ſheltered from the wind, the thunder, and the rain.

THE poet by a ſort of envoy addreſſes his own poem, and ſays this is from Antoine de Beccari, who knows little, but would willingly learn more. Petrarch ſent this poet a few lines rather than a ſonnet, in which he teſtifies his gratitude, and proves it by avoiding to anſwer him in ſuch a manner as would have confeſſed his own ſuperiority.

PETRARCH ſet out from Naples at the

the end of December, and went directly to Parma, which he found in a very unhappy ſituation. The brothers of the family of Correge were diſunited; the city was blocked up by their enemies, and ſuffered all the diſtreſſes that war, famine, and internal diviſions produce. This redoubled Petrarch's deſire to return to his friends at Avignon, to Laura, and to his Tranſalpine Parnaſſus as he called his retreat at Vaucluſe. The difficulty was to get out of Parma with ſafety. He could not paſs on the Weſtern ſide, which was his ſhorteſt road to France; that road was ſhut up entirely; and if he went towards the Eaſt, he muſt go by the army of the enemy. There are certain uneaſy ſituations of the mind which cauſe perſons of the leaſt intrepidity to brave the greateſt dangers; and ſuch was Petrarch's. He ſet out in February at ſun-ſet with a ſmall number of perſons, who agreed to run the ſame riſk as himſelf.

ſelf. About midnight, near Rheggio, a troop of robbers ruſhed from their ambuſcade, and came down upon them, crying, Kill! kill! All their reſource was in flight, favoured by the darkneſs of the night. Petrarch in this precipitate retreat was thrown from his horſe, which had ſtumbled againſt ſomething in the road; and the fall was ſo violent, that he ſwooned. When he came to himſelf, he was ſo bruiſed he could ſcarcely móve; but fear giving him ſtrength, he remounted his horſe, and was joined by his companions. They had not gone far, when a violent ſtorm of rain and hail, with thunder and lightening, rendered their ſituation almoſt as bad as that they had eſcaped from, and preſented them with the image of death in another ſhape. They paſſed a dreadful night, without finding a tree or the hollow of a rock to ſhelter them. Neceſſity ſharpens the invention, and they contrived an expedient

pedient which guarded them in ſome meaſure from the injuries of the weather. They ſet the backs of their horſes together on the ſide from whence the ſtorm drove, and thus they made a ſort of tent to cover them.

When the dawn of day permitted, Petrarch and his companions ſet out on their journey, and got ſafely to Scandiano, a caſtle occupied by the Gonzagas, friends to the lords of Parma. They learned there, that if the ſtorm had not detained them, they would have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and that they owed their ſafety to an accident they had conſidered as very unfortunate. Petrarch now felt the conſequence of his fall. He wanted reſt and aſſiſtance, and with great pain and difficulty after a few hours refreſhment got to Modena, where he ſlept, and the next day arrived at Bologna. He ſtopped there for advice; the

phyſicians aſſured him that the warm weather would alone reſtore him to health. He was however ſo much diſguſted with Italy in its preſent ſituation; or he was ſo eager to ſee Laura, without whom he felt life was inſupportable; that the moment he could ſit his horſe, he took the road to Avignon. On approaching that city, "I feel, ſays he, a greater ſoftneſs in the air, and I ſee with delight the flowers that adorn the neighbouring woods. Every thing announces the preſence of Laura. I have fled from tempeſts and war to ſeek a happy aſylum in the temple of love, and behold her who can calm the winds, and clear the air from all obſcuring clouds."

Soon after his return Petrarch went to paſs ſome days at Vaucluſe. He was charmed to ſee his houſe again, and his books. But the abſence of Philip de Cabaſſole rendered this ſpot leſs agreeable:

able: he was ſtill at Naples, detained there by his attachment to the memory of the deceaſed King, and the deſire of ſerving his family. Petrarch wrote the Biſhop this letter:

"I FLED from the fury of civil war, and have taken refuge in my old retreat. Here I find many things that pleaſe me, woods, rivers, and peace; but I find not my friend, and this place no longer charms me without his ſociety. I am however well ſatisfied; I am here, and I determine to paſs the reſt of my life in this place, if affairs do not change in Italy. This is my Parnaſſus. The Muſes driven out of Italy enjoy here the tranquillity they love. You may enjoy it too; and will find yourſelf much happier than at Naples, as I have experienced an agreeable contraſt between this place and Parma. Let others run after riches and honours; let them be mar-

quiſſes, princes, kings; I conſent: for my own part, I am content with being a poet. But on yours, will you be always wandering. You know the courts of princes, the ſnares they contain, the cares that devour, the perils that are run, the tempeſts to which they expoſe."

"BELIEVE me. Come back, and repoſe yourſelf in your dioceſe, while fortune yet ſmiles upon you. You have all you want: let us leave ſuperfluity to miſers. We ſhall have no fine tapeſtries, but our hangings will be decent. Our tables will not be ſumptuous and loaded with many courſes, but we ſhall have enough to ſuffice us. Our beds will not be covered with gold or purple, nor our chimneys or ſtairs be of marble; but we ſhall only ſleep the eaſier. The hour of death approaches, and warns me to limit my deſires. I confine myſelf to the cultivation of my gardens. I am going to plant in them fruit-trees, which ſhall refreſh me with

with their ſhade when I go to fiſh under my rocks. The trees I have are old, they want to be renewed. I beg of you to order your people to procure ſome pear and peach trees for me at Naples. I work for my old age, which I beſeech you to favour and protect. This is written to you in the midſt of the woods from your hermit of the Sorga."

About this time there was a great contention with reſpect to thoſe iſlands, we call the Canaries, and which the Romans named the Fortunate iſles; they are ſituated in the Atlantic Ocean near the kingdom of Morocco; they were called fortunate from the fruitfulneſs of the land, and the ſoftneſs of the air. In effect they have a perpetual ſpring. The rigours of winter are not felt in this climate, and the heats of ſummer are ſoftened by the zephyrs which continually ariſe to temper and refreſh the air. Theſe iſlands were loſt as it were in the decline

of the Roman empire; but the Genoeſe found them out again in the thirteenth century. Lewis of Spain, the eldeſt ſon of Alphonzo king of Caſtile and Blanche daughter of St. Lewis, who was charged with a negociation to the Pope from the king of France, took it into his head to aſk Clement to beſtow on him the government of theſe iſlands. Clement, who claimed the right of giving kingdoms and reigning over kings, and who naturally generous and benevolent gave a kingdom with the ſame eaſe as he would beſtow a benefice, granted this requeſt; and crowned Lewis at Avignon with all poſſible magnificence, and made a fine diſcourſe himſelf upon the occaſion: Lewis agreeing to ſacrifice his life and wealth to drive the infidels out of theſe iſlands; to eſtabliſh the true faith; to hold his kingdom from the Holy See, and pay an annual tribute. Theſe things ſettled, the Pope put the crown on his head, and the ſcepter in his hand; and ordered

ordered him to walk in proceſſion through the ſtreets of Avignon, with this fine regalia, and a moſt ſplendid train. Unfortunately this pompous march was diſturbed by a thunder-ſhower, which turned this moſt auguſt ceremony into a jeſt.

The new King abandoned by all his court arrived at his palace wet to the ſkin. A true prognoſtic that he would reign over nothing but fogs. In truth Lewis gained nothing by this election but the golden crown, and the pretty name of Prince of the Fortunates, juſt ſuited to the hero of a romance. But as to Clement he enjoyed two very ſenſible pleaſures, the giving an entertainment, and the making of a king. It was ſaid, continues Petrarch, who gave this detail to the biſhop of Cavaillon, that the Engliſh, who looked upon the iſlands that form their kingdom as the moſt fortunate of all others, were alarmed when they learnt

learnt that the Pope had given them away. Nothing can better paint the ridiculous fear of a proud and barbarous people, who were perſuaded that nature had treated them better than all others, and that their ſuperiority in all things was never to be called in queſtion. There is a bon-mot related of Don Sancho, the brother of this Lewis, with which I ſhall cloſe this account, as it is very ſimilar to it.

Don Sancho having been proclaimed king of Egypt by the Pope, who expected great things from his bravery, experience, and excellent education, aſked his interpreter who accompanied him (for he underſtood not the Latin tongue) what was the reaſon of thoſe ſhouts of applauſe. Sire, replied he, the Pope has created you king of Egypt. We muſt not be ungrateful replied the Prince; go thou and proclaim the holy father Caliph of Bagdat. This, concludes Petrarch, is what

what I call a pleaſantry well worthy of a king. They give to Don Sancho an ideal kingdom: he returns the favour with a chimerical pontificate.

One day Petrarch went to walk in a delightful place near Avignon, where he often met Laura: or if ſhe was not there, the objects around enchanted him, and recalled a thouſand pleaſing ſenſations. As he was meditating in this delightful ſituation, he wrote the following lines:

"Stream ever limpid, freſh, and clear,
"Where Laura's charms appear renew'd!
"Ye flowers that touch her gentle breaſt!
"Ye happy trees on which ſhe leans!
"Ye ſcenes embelliſh'd by her ſteps!
"If grief ſhall cloſe theſe wretched eyes,
"May ſome kind hand when I am dead
"Cover me with this happy earth,
"And lightly ſpread it round my tomb:

'Twill

" 'Twill ſhed delight on my abode:
" 'Twill make me fearleſs of its gloom.
" And when my fair majeſtic nymph
" Shall viſit this delightful ſpot;
" When ſhe ſhall view my ſilent duſt,
" And mark the change her love has wrought:
" Then will ſhe waft a gentle ſigh;
" Then will ſhe drop a tender tear;
" And like an infant at the breaſt,
" Who cannot ſpeak its ſoft diſtreſs,
" So will the heart of gentle Laura bleed,
" And in ſad ſilence treaſure up its woe."

1345. AFTER the departure of Petrarch from Italy, the commotions at Parma increaſed. Azon de Correge, who had expreſſed the higheſt regard for Petrarch, and had loaded him with benefits, gave him the moſt preſſing invitation to come to him at Verona, whither he had retired and taken up his abode. William de Paſtrengo, and other of his friends, joined in this entreaty. Petrarch was tenderly

derly attached to Azon, whoſe diſpoſition and manner of thinking ſuited him in all reſpects. And theſe kind invitations ſtaggered the reſolutions he had formed; to which ſome other motives were added for his quitting Avignon. He had been now fourteen years attached to Cardinal Colonna, who had done very little for him, and his fortune was very moderate. This maſter, who loved Petrarch tenderly, and had always behaved to him like a brother, was become difficult to pleaſe, unſatisfied, exacting; at leaſt he appeared ſo in the eyes of Petrarch, whoſe free and independent ſpirit could not brook the leaſt authority. The love of his country was always uppermoſt in his mind, and perhaps he flattered himſelf he ſhould be able to promote its peace. To theſe motives were joined ſome ſecret reaſons he did not think proper to divulge. And on theſe accounts he formed the reſolution to quit Avignon, Laura, and Vaucluſe. He went to diſcloſe his

deſign

deſign to Cardinal Colonna, who was much diſpleaſed at it.

"WHAT whim has taken you, ſaid he, to go and ſettle in Italy? You are inured to this country; you have paſſed your youth in it; you are known, loved, and eſteemed; you have many ties here; why ſhould you think of leaving it?"

"MY maſter, replied Petrarch, new times, new cares! This country is become odious to me. The land produces nothing but aconite. It is deſolated by hail and the Northern winds, and its waters are corrupted with lead. I am diſpleaſed with every thing here, even with the air I breathe. I came poor, and I leave it ſtill poorer. There is a pride or arrogance in this court to which I cannot ſubmit. Even you, who was ſo good, ſo gentle, ſo eaſy to live with formerly, permit me to ſay it, you are become reſtleſs, difficult, unſociable, and there is no living

living with you. When we are young, we can bear theſe things; but I feel that my humour changes with my years, and that I cannot ſupport this life. I know nothing more ridiculous or melancholy, than to grow old in ſlavery. Permit me to die free, and continue to indulge me with your favour."

"Ungrateful! ſaid the Cardinal with vivacity, and is it thus you acknowledge the goodneſs you ſpeak of? If I have not done for you all I wiſhed, I have loved you ſincerely, and ſet aſide every diſtinction that birth had created between us."

"Love is repaid by love, replied Petrarch. I have loved you ever ſince I had the honour of knowing you, and I ſhall never ceaſe to love you. Here then we are equal."

"But, replied the Cardinal, what

obliges you to determine with ſo much precipitation? All that you ſay of Avignon, have not you known it long? or is it a diſcovery that you have juſt made?"

"I CONFESS, replied Petrarch, that I have known it long. But I have been detained by habit, by my attachment for you, and my love for Laura. Every thing alters with time. My hair, which is become grey, warns me to change my manner of thinking, and my life. Love ſuits not with one of my age. My friend Azon has given me a higher reliſh for the beauties of Italy, our country. The air is purer, the water clearer, the flowers more beautiful. The roſes have a finer perfume: the fruits and herbs a finer taſte. It is time I ſhould go there to enjoy my liberty, and take poſſeſſion of my father's ſepulchre; there is not a moment to loſe. I aſk your permiſſion to depart."

"Go!

"Go! ſaid the Cardinal with indignation. You are an inconſtant. You will be ſoon weary of the life you are going to lead; you will regret that you have left, and I propheſy you will wiſh to return to it. I formed your youth, you have learned all that you know in my houſe. It is very diſagreeable to me that another ſhould reap the advantage. I am like the labourer who beholds a ſtranger gather the fruit of his pains; like the merchant who ſeeks from afar, thoſe merchandiſes he is deprived of enjoying. I do not hide from you my grief for your loſs; but know I can make a ſhift to live without you. I foreſee you will be always poor."

The repreſentations of the Cardinal, and the ſolicitations of his friends, could not alter the reſolution of Petrarch. He went to take leave of Laura. As ſhe was ignorant of the motive of his viſit, ſhe received him with a ſmiling face: but

when he had explained himſelf, and ſhe found he was to leave Avignon, ſhe changed colour, caſt her eyes to the ground, and kept ſilence. "There was ſomething ſo touching in her manner, ſays Petrarch, no words could deſcribe it. It ſeemed to ſay, Alas! you are going, Petracrh! Ah! who will rob me of my faithful friend?"

When Petrarch had bid adieu to Laura, and his two deareſt friends in Avignon, the Cardinal, and Socrates, he ſet out by land and went acroſs Piedmont to Parma. He ſtaid there only a few days to ſettle his affairs, this city being ſtill in commotion, and then embarked upon the Po to go to Verona, where he was impatiently expected.

The ſon of Petrarch, whom he had brought up ſecretly at Avignon, was now eight years old. Petrarch was determined to entruſt his education with

Renaud de Villefranche, who was eſteemed an excellent maſter. This no doubt was one of Petrarch's ſecret motives for removing to Italy. He had not been long there before he repented, and, as Cardinal Colonna had foretold, wiſhed himſelf at Avignon again. In leaving Laura he had left the half of himſelf; and the delightful hills and charming valleys ſhe frequented were ever preſent to his mind. Petrarch was informed by Sennucio D'elbene, that the Cardinal was extremely deſirous of his return, and that Laura ſuffered too much. It is certain ſhe was in very great affliction for the loſs of Petrarch. His friend Socrates alſo did all he could to engage him to return to Avignon, and wrote him the following letter:

"What demon has taken poſſeſſion of you? How could you bring yourſelf to abandon a country where you ſpent your youth ſo agreeably, and with ſo

much ſucceſs? How can you live ſo far from Laura, whom you tenderly love, and who is ſo much grieved at your abſence? If theſe things cannot touch you, reflect on the friends you have left here, who languiſh for want of your ſociety, and ardently beſeech you to return. Think of your Socrates, who cannot live without you. The ſovereign Pontiff aſks continually where you are, what you are doing, and why you do not return. What charms can that country have for you, which is a prey to the fury of war? Your protector, your friend Azon alſo is mortal, your fortune depends on his ſingle life. And who knows whether his affection will laſt? Alas! upon whom can we depend in this world?"

PETRARCH made this reply:

"You loſe your time, my dear Socrates: my reſolution is taken. I have caſt anchor in the place where I am. The

The Rhone with all its rapidity, nor even Laura herſelf can draw me from hence. To ſtagger my reſolution, you ſet before me the errors of my youth, and my fatal paſſion. Alas! I was when young too much engroſſed by periſhable attractions, too much tormented all my life with a fatal paſſion. I have left theſe things behind me, and I am making haſty advances to the end of my career. The friends I have left, above all yourſelf, my dear Socrates, would be the ſtrongeſt motives for my return. But is it not juſt you ſhould come once to me in Italy, who have been ſo often for your ſake at Avignon? The ſovereign Pontiff flatters me by the honour of his regard; but ſhall a thirſt after riches and honours make me wander for ever? Is it not better to enjoy with tranquillity the little that I poſſeſs? If that friend thinks I want more, the diſtance of my ſituation need not prevent his good will. Whoſe influence is more extenſive than his who

with one hand opens the gates of heaven, and with the other ſhuts thoſe of hell? But I am content with my lot, and I deſire nothing beyond it. Alas! I know it, Italy is torn to pieces by inteſtine diviſions, and threatened with foreign wars: but where can we live without peril, or find glory in the midſt of peace? My friend it is true is mortal: but ſhould he die, his glory and his virtues will ſurvive. I can never ſuſpect his affection and fidelity. If probity and candour have any habitation upon earth, they dwell in his heart. We live in the moſt perfect union, and this union promiſes to continue. Our time is divided by various employments, and the freedom and chearfulneſs of our converſations make our days and nights paſs inſenſibly away. When my paſſion for ſolitude comes on, I fly the city, and go wandering about the country without care or fear. In the ſummer, ſeated in the ſhade on a green lawn, or reclining on the bank of a river, I defy the

the heat of the dog-days. The autumn approaches, and I ſhall repair to the woods followed by the Muſes. How much to be preferred is this life to that we lead in a court where envy and ambition reign! I tread with delight upon the duſt of Italy. Its air appears more pure and ſerene, and my eyes contemplate with joy the ſtars which ſhine over it."

"When death ſhall terminate my labours, it will be a great conſolation for me to repoſe myſelf in the arms of this tender friend, who will cloſe my eyes, and depoſite my remains in its mother earth. And when time, which nothing can reſiſt, ſhall have mouldered away my tomb, the air of this beloved country ſhall gently agitate the aſhes it encloſed."

One ſhould have ſuppoſed Petrarch well reſolved, from this letter, to take up his future abode in Italy; yet ſuch was the irreſolution of his character, that

ſoon after this he returned to Avignon. Some great buſineſs, he ſaid, occaſioned him to depart with precipitation. This buſineſs was doubtleſs his love of Laura, and that inquietude of mind which attended him every where.

He ſet out from Verona about the end of November 1345. The troubles of Lombardy obliged him to take his rout through Switzerland. William de Paſtrengo would accompany him. They ſlept at Peſchiera, a little town on the lake of Gorda, the prettieſt ſituation one can behold. They paſſed the greateſt part of the night in converſation. The next morning, when they arrived at the confines of Breſcia and the Veroneſe, where they were to ſeparate, Petrarch in a fit of grief fell upon the neck of his friend, and with a flood of tears ſaid to him, Dear friend, it is with extreme concern I leave you to return into a foreign land. Perhaps I ſhall never ſee you

you again, but I ſhall love you while my life remains. Neither time nor diſtance can ever efface theſe feelings, which are deeply engraved on my heart. Take care of yourſelf, and never forget your Petrarch. William de Paſtrengo was in too much diſtreſs to be capable either of ſpeech or motion: he held his friend in his arms, and it was not without difficulty they were ſeparated. This account is in a letter of William de Paſtrengo, in which, after expreſſing his uneaſineſs for a journey undertaken in ſo inclement a ſeaſon acroſs mountains buffeted by the winds and covered with ſnow, he ſpeaks with pleaſantry of his life at Avignon.

"You have paſſed the Alps, ſays he to him. I have no longer any uneaſineſs about that: from hence I ſee you paying homage to our lords the Cardinals: you make way for the firſt, you bow to a ſecond, a third gives you his hand, and you are embraced by a fourth. You pay

to each of them the moſt profound obeiſance. I ſee you performing duty at your church of Saint Agneol; and from thence returning through the Elyſian fields. You attach yourſelf to your Colonna, cultivate your laurel, and rejoice under the ſhadow of your Delphic crown. I felicitate your happineſs: it gives me leſs envy than pleaſure; adieu my dear Petrarch."

PETRARCH went on horſeback from Lyons to Avignon along the banks of the Rhone. So impatient for the ſight of Laura, he wiſhed to follow the current of that rapid ſtream, which in the lofty mountains takes its ſource, and runs to pay its tribute to the ocean.

"NOR ſleep nor hunger ſtops thy hap-
"py courſe; while I, though love attracts,
"muſt linger far behind. If thou ſhouldſt
"paſs a beauteous vale, and feel the air
"more calm and pure, ſuſpend thy courſe;
"for

" for there ſometimes the object I adore
" graces thy banks. Perhaps (ſhall I in-
" dulge the flattering thought?) ſhe waits
" me there, and chides my long delay. Be
" thou my meſſenger of love: ſalute my
" fair one, and announce my preſence."

Nothing could be more flattering to Petrarch's ſelf-love than the reception given him on his return. He was received by the Pope and all the court with joy, and the higheſt marks of favour. The place of Apoſtolic Secretary was vacant at that time. It was a poſt of great honour, and led to an intimate connection and confidence with the Pope. It was laborious; but to compenſate for that, the revenue was very conſiderable. Clement, who loved Petrarch, and who wiſhed to fix him in his court, offered him this place; his friends alſo entreated him to accept of it, but nothing could prevail upon him; he was conſtant and unſhaken, always anſwering that he would be free,

free, and that he hated even golden chains. The ſame motive had engaged Horace to refuſe the place of ſecretary to Auguſtus. Upon his refuſal, it was given to a Neapolitan, named Francis. Petrarch knew and had correſponded with him. He is a good man, ſays he, and my friend, as he ſays; but illiterate, and without reputation.

THE melancholy event that happened at this time at Naples, affected Petrarch extremely. We have ſeen the dreadful commotions in that court. Prince Andrew had never yet been crowned in that kingdom, though acknowledged king in ſome foreign courts. The diſguſt and contempt of Queen Joan toward him increaſed every day; ſhe could not ſupport thoſe rough and vulgar manners which his unpoliſhed education had given him, and which were ſo contrary to the gallantry and magnificence which reigned at Naples. Fond of her couſin, the prince of Tarentum,

Tarentum, and governed by the Cataneſe and her cabal, ſhe would never allow her huſband the ſmalleſt ſhare in the government, or expreſs the leaſt attachment towards him, and it was thought hated him for his weakneſs of conſtitution. In the midſt of theſe diſſentions however, ſhe proved with child: this event, and the ſolicitations of the Hungarians, above all the monk Robert, awakened Andrew from his lethargy, and determined him on revenge. The Pope, long ſolicited by the Hungarian party, could no longer defer this coronation, and he fixed a day for it, on the condition that prince Andrew ſhould claim no right to the kingdom, which at his death was to ſucceed according to the will of king Robert. Every thing was ſettled, when the Cataneſe and her cabal ſeeing no other means to prevent the triumph of their enemies, conſpired againſt the life of prince Andrew. To render the execution of this plot more eaſy, they engaged the court to go and

paſs

paſs the month of September at Aveiſa, a little town between Naples and Capua, very delightfully ſituated.

On the eighteenth of this month, at night, Andrew, almoſt entirely undreſſed and ſtepping into the Queen's bed, was ſummoned as for affairs of great conſequence, and was told a courier was arrived from Naples in haſte with diſpatches for him. Scarcely was the prince got out of the chamber to go through the adjoining gallery, when the conſpirators, after the door of the Queen's apartment was ſhut, fell upon him with fury. One of them muffled him with gloves to ſmother his cries, others threw a cord with a running knot round his neck, and hung him by it upon a balcony which looked into the garden; and ſome who were in the garden pulled him with ſo much force by the feet, that the blood ſtreamed out of his noſe and eyes. In fine, having exerciſed all ſorts of cruelty and abuſe on his

his body, they let him fall into the garden, where they were going to bury him, when a Hungarian woman, nurſe to the prince, put them to flight by the violence of her cries.

Queen Joan was ſuſpected of being concerned in this ſhocking aſſaſſination. Her antipathy to her huſband, her love for Lewis, prince of Tarentum, her union with the conſpirators, who were either her lovers or her domeſtics, were ſtrong ſuſpicions, which ſhe confirmed by marrying the prince ſhe loved, before the time of mourning for her huſband was expired, and by her negligence in attempting to diſcover the accomplices in his murder. Some hiſtorians however juſtify her from having any hand in this black crime, and ſhe was unanimouſly cleared from it by the court of Rome; alſo Petrarch and his friend Boccace did not believe her culpable. It is to be wiſhed a young queen to whom Petrarch was attached, and who was

was a deſcendant of the great king Robert, could be juſtified; but it is hardly to be doubted that ſhe knew of the plot which was executed at the very door of her chamber, by her lovers, her confidents, and her ſervants; and to know and not prevent it, certainly made her partaker of the crime. It is not however ſurpriſing ſhe ſhould be acquitted, for ſhe was only eighteen years of age, and extremely beautiful.

THE biſhop of Cavaillon was almoſt a witneſs of this cataſtrophe. He had been made a Cardinal by Clement ſince his reſidence at Naples. In indignation for ſo horrible an outrage, and diſguſted with every thing in this debauched court, which he had not authority enough to remedy, he requeſted his diſmiſſion, and embarked in a galley the 23d of December to return to Avignon. The next day, which was Chriſtmas eve, a violent tempeſt caſt him on the coaſt of Herculano, where

where they landed with difficulty. At midnight there came a courier from the Queen, deſiring him to come back to Naples to baptize the child ſhe had juſt brought into the world. The Pope, whom ſhe had requeſted to ſtand godfather, had left to her choice the perſon that ſhould repreſent him on this occaſion, and ſhe gave the preference to the Biſhop of Cavaillon. This prelate, though fatigued by the tempeſt, ſet out immediately for Naples, and as ſoon as the ceremony was over, returned to his ſhip, which ſailed immediately. The Queen having no hopes of ever ſeeing him again, named for her chancellor, in his place, the Biſhop of Montcaſſin ſent by the Pope with the biſhop of Padua to take care of the little child, and preſide over its education. The Biſhop of Cavaillon ſuffered in his ſecond navigation a more dreadful tempeſt than in the former, from which he was miraculouſly delivered by the interceſſion of St. Magdelane,

which he aſſures us of himſelf in a life he wrote of that ſaint; and which he dedicated to the Archbiſhop of Lyons, who had a great zeal for her, and founded a chapel to her honour in that metropolis. This life is in the library of St. Victor at Paris. The Biſhop thus delivered from the peril with which he was threatened, arriv-
1346. ed ſafely at Avignon in January, 1346. What a joy for Petrarch again to ſee ſo dear a friend; he wiſhed to have a particular account of the events at Naples from ſo good a judge: writing ſome time after on this ſubject, to Barbatus of Sulmone, he ſays:

"I FORESAW that ſome dreadful calamities threatened this unhappy kingdom; but I own I did not imagine that a young and innocent Prince would be the firſt victim ſacrificed to barbarity. I recollect no action like this in the tragedies of old: but our age, fruitful in crimes, produces ſcenes of horror unknown to the antients, and which will prove

prove the aſtoniſhment of poſterity. O! unhappy Aveiſe, the common rights of humanity have been violated within thy walls, and thy ſubjects turned from their ſacred allegiance to their King. How could a Prince of ſuch hopes, the moſt innocent of men, how could he deſerve ſuch cruel treatment? Had he died by the ſword, or by poiſon (the common fate of kings) it would have been leſs affecting; but he was ſtrangled like a thief, and torn to pieces by the fury of wild beaſts. I forbear to mention the outrages on his body: why may I not by ſilence conceal all ſuch horrors as theſe from poſterity?"

We will now return to a more agreeable ſubject. From the ſituation of Laura, when Petrarch went to take leave of her, we may imagine the joy ſhe felt at the ſight of that faithful friend, who, ſhe feared, was gone from her for ever. She did not however expreſs outwardly all

that paſſed in her ſoul, but ſhe mixed nothing that was ſevere in her behaviour to him. Laura had this year ſome deep ſubject of grief. Petrarch does not ſay what, but it is probable it was the death of Ermeſſenda her mother. She was penetrated with the moſt lively ſorrow. It appears that Petrarch had now free acceſs to her houſe, and that he went to conſole her on this occaſion. "I went, ſays he, to expreſs my tender intereſt in Laura's grief. Love, who was my guide, has engraved for ever on my heart her looks and expreſſions."

"HER ſighs would have ſtopped a ri-
"ver's courſe, and calmed the rage of Ju-
"piter. Tears ſtood in her eyes; thoſe
"eyes radiant as the ſun. She joined pati-
"ence with ſorrow, and the divine har-
"mony of virtue with every burſt of woe.
"Were there ever, ſaid Love, ſo many
"charms, united with ſuch ſentiment and
"truth?"

A VERY

A very celebrated author ſays, Grief never appeared ſo lovely and divine, as in this picture of Laura drawn by the pen of Petrarch.

This year, 1346, Petrarch paſſed almoſt wholly at Avignon, and was witneſs to a violent quarrel between two of the principal Cardinals, about the election of an Emperor; Cardinal Taillerand and Cardinal de Commenges. They diſputed the matter in full council, each ſupported by the Cardinals, who were alſo divided into two parties. Taillerand and his ſide inſiſted that Charles of Luxemburg ſhould be Emperor, which the Gaſcon Cardinals oppoſed. Petrarch ſays theſe two Cardinals reſembled two bulls grazing in the paſtures of St. Peter, who threaten each other with their horns, and make the foreſts reſound with their bellowings. In the heat of their diſpute they exclaimed in the moſt injurious manner, and without any regard to the preſence of the

Pope. The Cardinal de Commenges reproached the Cardinal de Taillerand with having imbrued his hands in the blood of king Andrew. Provoked beyond measure at ſuch a reproach, the Cardinal de Taillerand roſe from his ſeat to ſtrike the Cardinal de Commenges, who was got up with the ſame deſign on his part; and they would certainly have fought, if the Pope and their brethren had not ſeparated them. This indecent behaviour cauſed a great cabal in the court of the Pope; the courtiers and ſervants of both parties went always armed, their palaces were barricaded, and if they had not been brought to a reconciliation at laſt, in all probability much blood would have been ſhed. "This comes, ſays Villani, a hiſtorian of that time, from the fault of thoſe Popes who admit into the ſacred college ſuch proud and powerful lords. This is the example they give us poor laity, and thus they imitate the humi-

lity

lity of the Apoſtles, whoſe repreſentatives they are."

Among the feaſts that the Pope gave this year to honour the preſence of the king of Bohemia, and Charles prince of Moravia, his ſon, who was deſigned by his father for the empire, and came to concert the meaſures with the Pope for his election; the city of Avignon gave a magnificent ball in a hall finely illuminated, at which were collected all the beauties of that city and of Provence. Charles, who was a gallant prince, having heard much of Laura, whom her beauty, and the love of Petrarch, had rendered ſo celebrated, ſought her every where in this aſſembly, and having diſcovered her in the croud, he paſſed by all the ladies whoſe age or rank gave them the right of ſuperior homage, and when he was near her, he caſt down his eyes and bowed his head after the French faſhion. Every body was pleaſed with ſo great a

mark of diſtinction given to Laura, to whom it was ſo juſtly due. This gave Petrarch a high idea of this prince's diſcernment, and a ſympathy for him, which cauſed him afterwards to take a ſingular intereſt in his fame and happineſs.

PETRARCH went according to cuſtom to keep his Lent at Vaucluſe. The Biſhop of Cavaillon, deſirous to enjoy with him the delights of ſolitude, went for fifteen days to the caſtle I have mentioned, built on the top of the rock, which ſeemed a fitter habitation for birds than for men. From what they had ſeen at Avignon and Naples, they were both diſguſted with great cities, and the intrigues and cabals of courts; and returned to a country life with double reliſh, the charms of which they delighted to dwell upon and deſcribe in their general converſations.

PHILIP

Philip had ſo much pleaſure in all Petrarch's works, that one day when he went to ſee him at Vaucluſe, and finding him in his library, he aſked him for ſomething to read. Petrarch preſented to him the works of Cicero and of Plato. Thoſe are not the things I want, ſaid the Biſhop bowing his head, give me ſomething of your own.

Soon after this, Petrarch ſent to Cardinal Colonna the account of his war with the Naiads, written in Latin verſe.

"You have heard me ſpeak, ſays Petrarch, of my war with the Naiads. The conteſt is about our boundaries; and the merits of the conteſt may be eaſily underſtood. Near the ſource of the Sorgia there are ſome huge rocks, which riſe aloft on each ſide, and projecting into the air, receive the winds and the clouds. The ſtreams run at the feet of theſe rocks,

rocks, and form the kingdom of the Naiads."

"THE Sorgia iſſues from a cavern, and rolls her freſh and glaſſy waves over a variegated bed of pebbles, which reſemble emeralds. I am poſſeſſed of a little rocky diſtrict, in the midſt of theſe waves; and here it is, that I have endeavoured to make an eſtabliſhment for the Muſes, who are driven almoſt from every part of the world. Hence this formidable war. The Naiads take it very ill, that I introduce foreigners into their dominions; and that I prefer nine old maids to a thouſand young virgins."

"BY levelling the rocks, and with much labour, I had formed a little territory which began to be covered with verdure. When lo! a troop of enraged Naiads ruſhed with fury from the rocks, and ravaged my infant ſettlement!

Alarmed with this ſudden eruption, I inſtantly mounted the rocks, to obſerve the havock which was made. As ſoon as the ſtorm was over, I came down, much aſhamed to have been thus vanquiſhed, and immediately re-eſtabliſhed my little ſtate. Scarce however had the ſun made his circuit round the world, when the Naiads returned again to the charge, carried every thing before them, and made deep lodgments in the hollows of my rocks."

"FILLED with reſentment, I reſumed my operations, determined to accompliſh my deſign. But I was obliged ſoon after to go into other countries, and was under the neceſſity of abandoning the enterpriſe. I had the good fortune however to reſtore the Muſes to the Roman ſtate, where they were become in a great meaſure ſtrangers, and fixed them in the capitol. Six years had elapſed, during which time I had often croſſed the ſea,

and

and had paſſed and repaſſed the Alps. At length I returned to the ſeat of war, and found not the leaſt remains of my labours. The enemy had taken advantage of my abſence, and had again ravaged my little kingdom. Nay, they had even eſtabliſhed a colony of fiſh, which I obſerved ſwimming about much at their eaſe."

"ROUSED with indignation, I again take arms. I inliſt under my banner the ſhepherd, the farmer, and the fiſherman. The ſun likewiſe, the moon, and the dog-ſtar appear as my auxiliaries. We attack the rocks with iron, and rend away prodigious maſſes. We open the bowels of the earth, and tear out her bones. In fine, the Naiads are a ſecond time driven from the territory, and the Muſes are once more eſtabliſhed."

"THE Naiads, as they roll their waves

waves along my ſhores, ſee with regret their own defeat and my triumph. At preſent they utter only ſome vain murmurs and ineffectual threats: but I foreſee their intentions, and am well aware of their wiles. They are waiting till Aquarius ſhall pour out his ſtreams; and till the mountains ſhall be covered with ſnow and ice; and then they expect, that the cavern will ſend forth her ſwelling billows to their aid. But I am guarded on every ſide. Some immenſe rocks, which have with difficulty been ranged about my territory, are a ſufficient barrier againſt their utmoſt efforts. And I am not diſmayed, though I ſhould be attacked by all the waters of the Po and the Araxes. The Muſes are now ſecurely fixed on their new Parnaſſus; you ſee the mountain with the double ſummit, the ſprings of Hippocrene, the woods of the poets, &c. &c."

"If you prefer the repoſe of the country

country to the buſtle of the town, come and enjoy it here. Be not frighted with the homelineſs of my fare, or the hardneſs of my beds. Even Kings themſelves are ſometimes cloyed with their luxuries, and ſeek out a plainer diet: the variety delights, and they return to their former pleaſures with more exquiſite reliſh. But if you think otherwiſe, bring with you the richeſt dainties, and the viands of Veſuvius; your veſſels of ſilver, and every thing which can court the ſenſe. Leave the reſt to me. You ſhall have a bed upon the green turf, under the ſhade of the trees, a concert of nightingales; figs, raiſins, and water freſh drawn from the cooleſt ſprings. In one word, you ſhall have every thing which can be ſupplied by the hand of nature, the only ſource of true pleaſure."

THE war with the Naiads was finally terminated the following year; and Petrarch gives the Cardinal an account of

of this accommodation in another Latin epiſtle.

" It is now ten years ſince this war commenced. The ſiege of Troy, and the conqueſt of Gaul by our forefathers, were not of longer duration. Every effort was ineffectual. The Naiads were victorious. I threw down my arms, and my territory was ſubdued. I raiſed no more banks, no more rocks to check their progreſs; henceforward they moved at liberty; and like a cautious pilot I adapted my ſails to the courſe of the wind.

" It was a great pleaſure to me, to drive the Naiads from their empire; but then the war was to be renewed every year. The ſummer was favourable to my projects, but the winter reſtored again to the enemy all my conqueſts. Might I be allowed to draw a parallel between the labours of a poet, and thoſe of the greateſt princes; I ſhould compare my enterprize

prize to that of Xerxes, who threw a bridge over the Helleſpont; to that of Cæſar who attempted to bind with chains the horns of Brunduſium; or to that of Caligula who exhibited on the ſea of Baiæ the third example of a mad and unbounded pride."

"My plan is now changed. I find it is impoſſible to conquer nature, or ſubdue the elements. I have given therefore a free courſe to the Naiads; and have placed the muſes in a little nook towards the bottom of the rocks. They are ſecured by a kind of rampart, which the Naiads can never overthrow, without ſapping the foundations of the mountain. The habitation is very ſmall, but it is ſufficient; for the muſes have few viſitors, and are not at all beloved by the vulgar."

It appears that Cardinal Colonna accepted this invitation of Petrarch's, and

that he paſſed no year without viſiting his hermitage. We will now return again to Laura.

She had a friend who was wiſe and amiable, and who was in the intereſts of Petrarch as much as virtue and honour permitted: ſhe wiſhed him to be loved, but with a pure and tender friendſhip. When ſhe ſaw him rejected, and almoſt in deſpair, ſhe encouraged him, and reanimated his ſpirits; but ſhe reſtrained him alſo when he required it. On the other ſide ſhe did all ſhe could to engage Laura to treat Petrarch with leſs rigour. One day when ſhe repreſented to him the tender expreſſions of love in Laura's countenance and behaviour when he deſerved them; "Incredulous! adds ſhe, and can you after all this have any doubt of her affection?" This friend appears in the viſion of the death of Laura, where ſhe is deſcribed as a ſoft voice ſpeaking to Petrarch.

The conſtitution of Laura was very delicate; her frequent confinements in childbed, and ſome domeſtic chagrins, had exhauſted her ſo much, that though ſtill young her health began to decline, and ſhe drooped apace, which touched Petrarch to the ſoul. "Virtue, ſays he, would diſappear with Laura, the world would be another chaos, and no ſun would enlighten its dark manſion. O heaven! grant me to die before Laura, that I may never ſee ſo dreadful an event." Laura had a complaint in her eyes this year which was extremely painful; ſhe was even threatened with the loſs of ſight.

"My tears, ſays Petrarch, were dried "up; my ſtate peaceful and happy; when "a thick cloud threatened with a total "eclipſe the ſun of my life. Oh nature, "thou wiſe and tender mother, canſt "thou have the heart to deſtroy the "fineſt of thy works?"

Petrarch

Petrarch went often to ſee Laura in her confinement: he found her one day cured of her complaint; and by a ſort of ſympathy, the cauſe of which lovers can better explain than phyſicians, the defluxion paſſed immediately from the eyes of Laura to thoſe of Petrarch; he looked upon this paſſage, this communication, as the greateſt favour he had received at the hands of love. "I fixed my eyes on "Laura's, ſays he, and that moment a "ſomething inexpreſſible, like a ſhooting "ſtar, darted from them to mine; this is "a preſent from love in which I rejoice; "how delightful it is thus to cure the "darling object of one's ſoul!"

Petrarch would have been too happy in ſo much kindneſs from Laura, if a little quarrel had not happened between them, which for a time gave him the moſt ſenſible concern. One of thoſe meddling envious people, who are found in every place, and who delight in troub-

ling the peace of families with their falſe and idle tales, and above all aim at dividing thoſe hearts which are united in the bonds of love or friendſhip, got it reported to Laura, that Petrarch impoſed upon her; that ſhe was not the real object of his love and of his verſes; but that under her borrowed name he hid from the public a paſſion he had for another lady to whom his poetry was ſecretly addreſſed. Laura, too much like her ſex in this particular, gave ear to a report ſo deſtitute of all probability: ſhe deprived Petrarch of her preſence and converſation, and took every precaution to prevent the poſſibility of his ſeeing her. He, on his part, watched for her every where, and by theſe little ſtratagems he ſometimes obtained a ſight of her. "My joys, ſays he, are like the "bright days of winter, of flattering "aſpect, but ſhort duration."

THIS little anecdote, with many others, may ſerve to remove the doubt ſome

have

have unjuſtly entertained of the ſtrength of Laura's affection for Petrarch, repreſenting her as a coquet pleaſed only with his praiſes and admiration. But how different does her character appear to thoſe who ſtudy it attentively; and in particular how undivided and conſtant was her love! Sure characteriſtics of a perfect affection, and directly oppoſite to the behaviour of thoſe women who are famed for coquetry. I doubt not that her ruined conſtitution was owing, as to many private chagrins, only hinted at by Petrarch (ſuch as an unkind huſband, and the perceiving in ſome of her children diſpoſitions that were unpromiſing) ſo the decay of her health might ariſe alſo from her anxiety in her frequent ſeparations from Petrarch, eſpecially the laſt, which ſhe had ſo tenderly lamented, and that attention in all her conduct toward him which will wear out a mind formed with the ſenſibility of Laura's. And to this we ought to impute her weakneſs

in crediting ſo abſurd a report; the only weakneſs, except her love itſelf, that appears in her character. She was however too reaſonable to continue for any time ſo unjuſt a quarrel. She was convinced of the innocence of Petrarch, and received him as uſual. Our poet, reeſtabliſhed in the good graces of Laura, recovered his loſt tranquillity.

It may be recollected that Petrarch was made Archdeacon of Parma, and kindly treated by Hugolin de Roſſi the biſhop. An occaſion offering to add a Prebend to it; the Pope did not let it ſlip, but gave it to Petrarch. The other Canons, who looked upon him with envy, did all they could to embroil him with the Biſhop. The character of Hugolin was too eaſily wrought upon; that ſoftneſs of manners, and that goodnature which rendered him ſo amiable in ſociety, occaſioned great defects in his public character. He was apt to believe

all that was ſaid to him, and flatterers turned him which way they pleaſed. The enemies of Petrarch perſuaded this Biſhop that Petrarch was gone to Avignon to calumniate his character, and that he only ſtaid there to gain this end. Petrarch, informed of theſe falſe reports, and ſolicitous to preſerve the good opinion of the Biſhop, wrote him the following letter:

"I CAN hold no longer. Permit me to diſburthen my heart to you. Nature has endued you with a ſincere, kind, and equitable diſpoſition. I am attached to you. But you have conceived unjuſt ſuſpicions of me, which have no foundation. I know not what ſerpents have breathed their venom around you. Permit me to debate this matter. We are in the month of December, when ſlaves among the antients were allowed to ſay every thing to their maſters. There are a ſet of envious ſpirits, who delight

to ſeparate friends. Let ſuch be put away; I have no conteſt with them, I deſpiſe them from my ſoul. I will have you only, my father, for my witneſs and my judge: if you condemn me, I will appeal from you to your conſcience; that ſhall abſolve me. They tell you I am come to this court to do you a miſchief. I ſeek to hurt any one? I! who from my childhood have ſuffered with patience all the wrongs done to me from thoſe who owed me ſervice? Have I ever returned evil for evil? Have I ever ſet a ſnare even for my enemies? Have I attacked the reputation of any one, his property, or his perſon? Let my life be examined with the ſtricteſt ſeverity, nothing of this ſort will be found in it. Attacked by thoſe who hated me, I have often contained my anger in my breaſt, to the hazard of being thought a coward. Sometimes I have lamented and complained: the dove and the lamb do ſo too. There is not a ſingle perſon whoſe repu-

reputation is wounded by my tongue. I have only to accuſe myſelf of ſome letters, in which I anſwer my cenſurers without naming them. I never in any juſtification have paſſed the bounds of decency and humanity. I have rather imitated the moderation of Scipio, who would never revenge any affront he had received from his countrymen. I think with the Satiriſt, that vengeance ſhould be left to women; and when grieved to the bottom of my ſoul, I truſt my cauſe to God. Having thus treated my enemies with gentleneſs, am I capable of attacking my friends? A lamb among wolves, ſhall I become a wolf among lambs? Of what uſe would it be to me to fly cities and public affairs, to ſeek ſolitude, repoſe, and ſilence, if my place was among the wicked?"

"I now experience the truth of what was told me, That to learn to live well is the moſt difficult of all arts. The event

vent of our conduct ſeldom anſwers the intention. I have in my life paſſed for a magician and ſorcerer; becauſe I loved to be alone, and to read Virgil. Apuleius merited this accuſation better than myſelf, which he refuted by his elegant work called the Golden Aſs. How difficult is it to ſave the bark of reputation from the rocks of ignorance! Exerciſe your genius, paſs whole nights in labour, give to the public a good book; if there is any thing in it (as there muſt be many things) which the ignorant do not underſtand, they will ſay immediately you are a ſorcerer. But this is a trifle. I would rather they ſhould attack my underſtanding than my heart: I would rather paſs for a magician than a knave. But even into this precipice am I fallen, which I have always avoided with care. Envy purſues me to my moſt ſecret retreats. Perſius had reaſon for this exclamation, How vain are the cries of men, how frivolous their occupations! The only motives

tives which induce men to do evil, to wrong one another, are hatred, wrath, envy, fear, or hope. I hate you, my father! You have never done me any evil: on the contrary, before I had the honour of filling up the firſt place after yours in your church, you treated me with an unmerited diſtinction. As to wrath, that could have no place; our converſations were always peaceful and friendly. As to envy, I take God and my conſcience to witneſs I never envied any man; I wiſh I could ſay as much of contempt. Content with my lot, I have more reaſon to fear the envy of others towards me. My father, if I might ſpeak with ſo much freedom, I would add, I pity your fate, and that of your brethren who have the weight of a dioceſe to ſupport. But trouble and perplexity is the lot of all who play a firſt part on the ſtage of this world. And laſtly, as to hope, would that cauſe me to injure you? Your fall would never be my riſe. And

allow

allow me to assure you, I would not exchange my repose for your labours, my poverty for your riches. It is not that I despise your fortune; but if I was offered the same rank, nothing would persuade me to accept of it. I should not speak in this manner perhaps, if I had not known the sovereign Pontiff, and those men who shine around him in the Roman purple. But the connexion I have had with them, has convinced me that their felicity is a shadow without a reality. Pope Adrian the IV. says in his Philosophical Trifles, 'I know no person more unhappy than the sovereign Pontiff. Labour alone, were that his only evil, would destroy him in a short time. His seat is full of thorns, his robe stuck with points, and of an overwhelming weight. His crown and tiara shine, but it is with a fire that will consume him.' 'I have risen, by degrees, adds he, from the lowest to the highest dignity in this world, and have never found that any of

these

theſe elevations made the leaſt addition to my happineſs. On the contrary, I feel it impoſſible to bear the load with which I am charged."

"I will add in vanity, that had I emulated your dignity, I might have poſſeſſed a more valuable ſituation than yours; but I have always preferred a modeſt liberty to a brilliant ſlavery. If the perſon who would ſo highly have honoured me was not ſtill alive, I would not have made this boaſt. And it ſhould rather appear that my heart was diſpoſed towards you, when I accepted the Archdeaconry of your church, after refuſing more conſiderable benefices. What, ſay my enemies, then, does he abſent himſelf for? What is he doing at court? I will tell you. I languiſh, I ſuffer, I loſe my time; the greateſt loſs we can ſuſtain in this world: but I cannor reſiſt ſome friends who detain me. It would be eaſier for me to tell you what I do not do,

do, than the buſineſs I am employed in. I hurt no one but myſelf: inſtead of injuring you, I would be of ſervice to you if poſſible. To ſuſpect a man who thinks this, is an error: to hate him, will be a cruelty. I conjure you by all that is moſt ſacred, baniſh ſuſpicion: it is the bane of friendſhip. Vouchſafe to receive me among the number of your friends. I have long truſted in this indulgence. If you doubt my fidelity, put it to the proof. If you judge me unworthy of your kindneſs, caſt me off without harſhneſs. You will loſe nothing by rejecting me: but your reputation would ſuffer, and that would be a great loſs to you."

PETRARCH had a friend at Parma, called Luke Chriſtien. He was born at Rome, and poſſeſſed a beneſice at Placentia. He was attached to the houſe of Colonna, and was often at the Cardinal's. Petrarch had lately reſigned to him a Canopry of Modena, which the Pope had conferred on him, and which, according

cording to the cuſtom of that age, he might have held with his Archdeaconry. To this friend he gave his letter for the Biſhop of Parma, charging him to ſecond it with all that friendſhip could ſuggeſt. "You know better than any one, ſaid Petrarch, what I think of our Biſhop, when he is not ſurrounded by flatterers, who are the peſt of the great. We ſhall ſee what will be his anſwer to my long letter. Examine him with attention: the pen alone will not pourtray the heart; the air, the geſture, the colour, the voice, the forehead, the foot, the hand, the eyes, the eye-brows, all ſpeak. But to thoſe who are abſent, this language is loſt. Be very obſervant of theſe things, and ſuffer me not to be deceived. I have done all that I could to diſſipate unjuſt ſuſpicions. I have kindled the lamp of truth, if he will open his eyes to behold it. If not, I have diſcharged my conſcience, and ſhall uſe no further arguments.

ments. Conſtraint will never produce conviction."

SOME days after this, Petrarch went to Vaucluſe with his friend Socrates. The Biſhop of Cavaillon ſent a meſſage to them immediately on their arrival, inviting them both to come and ſee him without any ceremony in the ſame dreſs they were in. Petrarch replied by the following billet:

"YESTERDAY we quitted the city of ſtorms to come and take refuge in this port, and taſte the ſweetneſs of repoſe. We have only coarſe garments, ſuch as ſuit the ſeaſon of the year, and the place we inhabit. We will come to you in this ruſtic faſhion, ſince you will have it ſo. We do not ſcruple appearing thus in your town; and the deſire we have to ſee you is ſo ſtrong, as to riſe above all other conſiderations. Of little conſequence is our outward appearance

ance before a friend, who can read the moſt ſecret thoughts of our hearts. If you wiſh to ſee us often, you will not refuſe the indulgence we aſk, that you will always prove your friendſhip by treating us with the utmoſt freedom."

These journeys of Petrarch to Vaucluſe were ſhort. It appears that his affairs at Avignon detained him. Sometimes he paſſed only a day to prune his trees, and look round his gardens. He gives a pleaſing deſcription of one of theſe days in a letter to William de Paſtrengo:

"My diſguſt to the city, and love of the country, has brought me to this fountain, which has the virtue of giving wings to the imagination. You recollect that field formerly covered with ſtones; at preſent it is become a garden enamelled with flowers. The river Sorgia refreſhes it on one ſide: I have encloſed it

with a wall to the South, and high rocks on the other ſide ſhade it from the morning ſun. On theſe rocks the birds make their neſts; ſome deck them with moſs, others with the leaves of trees. It is a charming ſight to ſee theſe tender animals juſt peeping from their eggs, and ſoon after with fear and quaking trying their little wings, and ſeizing with their timid beaks the food that is brought them. When I walk in the meadows on the banks of my river, when I examine the trees I ingrafted myſelf, and the laurels I have tranſplanted from foreign countries, the image of my dear William appears to me on every ſide; the hillock on which we ſat, the bank on which we repoſed, the ducks and drakes we diverted ourſelves with making in the water that was running at our feet. Here we entertained ourſelves with recalling the Muſes from their long exile, with comparing the Greek and Latin poets: here we gave ourſelves up

to

to the delights of unreſtrained converſation, and ſhould have forgotten our evening refreſhment, had we not been reminded by the ſhades of night."

"In the midſt of ſuch agreeable ideas, time paſſes imperceptibly, the day wears, and I found I muſt depart. I had ſcarcely got out of the narrow paſſage which encloſes this valley, when the wings of darkneſs came over me, and I redoubled my ſteps. Deſcending along the ſide of the river, I perceived a group of men and women, who were coming towards me. The French luxury, which has confounded the dreſs of the ſexes, prevented me at firſt from diſtinguiſhing them; but as they approached nearer, their faces became plain, and the ambiguity diſappeared; I diſcovered ribbands, necklaces of pearls, ornaments on the head, rings, and gowns edged with purple. We ſaluted each other. What an agreeable ſurpriſe, my dear William! I diſcovered

the object of your love, the beauty whom I obſerved you ſo enchanted with. What a countenance! What features! With her bow and quiver, I ſhould have taken her for Diana. I ſee my friend with pleaſure in the eyes of this nymph. After ſaluting me, ſhe took hold of my hand, and we entered into converſation. But firſt I addreſſed myſelf to the company. May I aſk, ſaid I, without impertinence, what is the intention of your walk? We are going, they anſwered, to ſee that fountain ſo much ſpoken of. But I was not thus to be deceived. Your beautiful miſtreſs was not ignorant of your ſituation here; and this journey was a good excuſe to ſeek your image, and re-trace your ſteps. I read this in her face; and all thoſe who know by experience the ready ſtratagems of love, would have been of the ſame opinion. Her ſteps were quick; ſhe had an ardour, a gaiety, a ſatisfaction in viewing theſe places, which could

ariſe

ariſe from nothing but this paſſion. I would return with her to the fountain. I thought I was with you, that I ſaw and heard you. The eyes of your nymph ſparkled with that vivid flame, the warmth of which is ſo delightful to lovers. We converſed about you; and I ſhould have been there ſtill, if night had not ſeparated us."

PETRARCH had not ſeen his brother ſince he had taken the habit, which was five years. He went thither in the beginning of February, and was received by them as a meſſenger from heaven. What was his joy to ſee that brother, whom he ſo tenderly loved, and whoſe taſte for the world had given him ſo much anxiety, content with the ſtate he had embraced, and not regretting that he had forſaken! The Carthuſians, who had heard Petrarch ſpoken of as the fineſt genius and the moſt eloquent man of his age, flattered themſelves he would give them 1347.

ſome diſcourſes ſuited to their condition. He ſtaid only one day and night with them; but at his departure, he promiſed to ſend them a treatiſe on the happineſs of a monaſtic life: and he kept his word. The intention of this work was to compare the peace and harmony of their ſtate with the uneaſy and turbulent lives led by the people of the world. In his letter he writes thus:

"My deſires are fulfilled. I have been in paradiſe, and ſeen the angels of heaven in the form of men. Happy family of Jeſus Chriſt! How was I raviſhed in the contemplation of that ſacred hermitage, that pious temple which reſounded with celeſtial pſalmody! In the midſt of theſe tranſports, in the pleaſure of embracing the dear depoſite I confided to your care, and in diſcourſing with him and with you, time ran ſo rapidly that I ſcarcely perceived its progreſs. I never ſpent a ſhorter day or night. I

came

came to ſeek one brother, and I found a hundred. You did not treat me as a common gueſt. The activity, the ardour with which you rendered me all ſorts of ſervices, the agreeable converſations I had with you in general and particular, made me fear I ſhould interrupt the courſe of your devout exerciſes. I felt it was my duty to leave you, but it was with extreme pain I deprived myſelf of hearing thoſe ſacred oracles you deliver. I did propoſe to have made you a ſhort diſcourſe; but I was ſo abſorbed, I could not find a moment to think of it. In my ſolitude I ruminate over that precious balm which I gathered, like the bee, from the flowers of your holy retreat. I ſhall write to you the things I ought to have ſaid. I believe myſelf always with you."

PETRARCH compoſed this treatiſe 1347. He paſſed the Lent of this year at Vaucluſe, according to cuſtom. His

friend Lelius, who came with him, was obliged to leave him before the end of April; and not being able to bid him adieu, went away without ſaying a word. A little event which happened at Thor, furniſhed Petrarch with an occaſion to write to this friend ſoon after his return to Avignon. Thor is a little town, two leagues from Vaucluſe. The Duke of Anceſune, a deſcendant from Laura by the mother's ſide, is the preſent lord of Thor. Gerard Amic poſſeſſed it at this time: he was a man given up to debauchery: perſuaded that every thing upon earth ought to contribute to his pleaſures, he looked upon the whole world as his Seraglio. A young man fond of a girl who lived near him, obtained her perſon under the promiſe of marriage. The girl, who was very pretty, was ſo unfortunate as to pleaſe this lord, who uſed every ſtratagem to ſeduce her, but in vain. Love to this youth prevailed over vanity and intereſt. Gerard

not

not enduring the pre-eminence given to another, had him accuſed before his tribunal of violating this maiden, and he was caſt into priſon. When the girl was interrogated, ſhe denied the violation, and frankly confeſſed ſhe had conſented to all that paſſed, and only demanded from her lover that he ſhould perform his promiſe of marrying her: the young man wiſhed nothing ſo much. Let them take off my irons, ſaid he, and I am ready to do what ſhe aſks of me. They were both free, and of a ſuitable age and ſtation. This affair, which was very plain, took an unhappy turn, becauſe the rival was alſo the judge, and determined on revenge. He therefore threatened the young man that he ſhould be hanged for this offence. So great an injuſtice raiſed all the neighbourhood of Thor againſt him. The touching ſituation of theſe young perſons, who loved one another, and were deſirous of being united, intereſted every body in their behalf. Some friends

of

of Petrarch came to beg him with tears in their eyes to employ his credit in the court of Avignon, to ſave this unfortunate youth, whoſe life was in ſuch imminent peril. Petrarch ſent expreſs to Avignon his faithful fiſherman, with this letter for Lelius:

"IT happened with us as with Pompey and Cornelia, who had not the power when they parted to bid one another adieu. Words are, in fact, but the ſhadows of our thoughts. Of what uſe are long diſcourſes between friends whoſe ſouls are diffuſed into each other? I have a good work to propoſe to you, and I hope you will co-operate with me in it." Petrarch then mentions the fact, and ſays:

"MY friend, both you and I have experienced the diſtreſſes of love: and it is but juſt we ſhould lend our aid to thoſe who ſuffer from this paſſion. It is true,

true, the great ſoul of our maſter is exempt from theſe weakneſſes: but he is not the leſs ſenſible to human miſery. Let them not ſay that in the country they feel not the flames of love: it is a miſtake; that little god extends his empire over all nature: every thing that breathes is ſubject to his laws. Virgil ſays, The follies he occaſions ought to be pardoned; but he adds, if the gods of hell know how to pardon. I doubt that Bellerophon, who has no humanity, will be as inexorable as theſe gods themſelves. Heated by jealouſy, he thirſts after the blood of a rival preferred to himſelf. Beg our maſter to write to him to demand the liberty of this unhappy priſoner. The courier who brings you my letter, is the young man's friend: he will tell you his name, and add every minute circumſtance. Whatever be the event, you and I have done all that depends on us to ſuccour theſe unfortunate lovers,

lovers, whoſe ſituation is more affecting than can be expreſſed."

THREE days after this, the letter from Cardinal Colonna to the lord of Thor not being arrived, Petrarch was obliged to ſend the ſame courier again to Avignon. The report was ſpread abroad that the young man was to be condemned and executed immediately, and that his irritated judge ſhut his ears againſt every ſolicitation. Petrarch was again beſought to write to Lelius; and with his letter he ſent him ſome virgin oil from Vaucluſe (ſo they call the oil which runs from the olive without being preſſed); and he adds, "I ſhould think that Minerva, who diſcovered the olive tree, had quitted Athens for Vaucluſe, if in my Africa I had not placed her at Lerici and Porto Venere." Petrarch does not tell us what was the event of this affair. It marks the deſpotiſm of the lords of provinces; and the humanity and public ſpirit

ſpirit of Petrarch, who could not bear tyrants of any ſort, either great or ſmall, or any thing that tended to encroach on the liberty of human nature. This manner of thinking cauſed him however to favour Rienzi's uſurpation, which he repented of afterwards, and for which he has been bitterly reproached. This extraordinary affair was as follows:

Nicholas de Rienzi, whom the reader will recollect on an embaſſy to Rome, had long conceived the project of drawing the Roman people out of their lethargy, and the ſlavery they were held in. His converſations with Petrarch, who was perſuaded Rome ought to govern the world, no doubt confirmed him in this aſtoniſhing enterpriſe. He diſcharged his office of Apoſtolic Notary, given him by the Pope, with great appearance of honour, juſtice, and diſintereſtedneſs; and went about declaiming every where againſt the injuſtice of

the great. After he had thus prepared the minds of the people for a revolution, he cauſed little emblematical pictures to be ſtuck up every where, which expreſſed the miſery of the Romans in their preſent ſtate, compared with their paſt grandeur and felicity. Theſe emblems he explained, and took the occaſion to harangue the aſſembly with ſighs, groans, tears, and expreſſions of indignation. He then aſſembled in ſecret thoſe who appeared beſt prepared for his confidence. Stephen Colonna, who would never have ſuffered ſuch meetings, was abſent. When he had worked up the Romans to the diſpoſition he wiſhed; he aſſured them of ſufficient means to re-eſtabliſh the good ſtate of Rome; which was a phraſe of raillery with its preſent great men. In the funds of the Apoſtolic chamber, adds he, I have all that is neceſſary for this enterpriſe. But God forbid, I ſhould touch it without the will of the ſovereign Pontiff. This was

a cunning turn to reſt his conduct on the pleaſure of the Pope. And though the Romans were much diſguſted with the holy father for enriching the city of Avignon with their ſpoils; they did not chooſe openly to oppoſe him, and were pleaſed with Rienzi, who had found a pretext to retain this money at Rome without offending the Pope.

They unanimouſly therefore proclaimed Rienzi their chief, and devoted themſelves to his will: he made them ſign an oath, to which he firſt put his own name, to procure the good ſtate of Rome.

In May 1347 he had it cried in the ſtreets, by ſound of trumpet, that each citizen ſhould come without arms the next night to the church of the caſtle of St. Angelo at the ringing of the great bell. It was inconceivable how a man without name, ſupport, or dignity, ſhould think of convoking an aſſembly of conſpirators by

by the ſound of trumpet. It ſucceeded, however; and the Roman people ran in crouds to the church at the time appointed, where Rienzi had thirty maſſes for the Holy Spirit, repeated almoſt together, at which he himſelf aſſiſted from midnight till nine in the morning, which was the day of Pentecoſt, when he choſe that it might be believed he was inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt. He then went out of the church with his head bare, but armed, and a hundred men to eſcort him armed likewiſe. The people followed him in crowds, without any knowledge of what he was going about; he walked at the ſide of Raimond biſhop of Orviette, the Pope's Vicar. He was a good man, a great canoniſt, but little ſuited to repreſent the ſovereign Pontiff, as his aſſiſting on this occaſion is a proof, which he ought with all his power to have oppoſed. In the midſt of this train, who redoubled their acclamations, Rienzi marched ſtraight to the capitol, and mounted

mounted the tribunal, from whence he harangued the people, and propoſed all the regulations they wiſhed for; freedom from oppreſſion, peace, plenty: which were to be accompliſhed at the Pope's expence, and on pretence of ſerving him. The preſence of his Vicar appeared to juſtify him in all, and to give a ſanction to his authority. Rienzi was declared by the people, as Veſpaſian was by the ſenate, Sovereign of Rome with unbounded authority. Rienzi, at the ſummit of his wiſhes, conſented to accept their offer only on two conditions: the firſt, That they ſhould give him the Pope's Vicar for colleague: the ſecond, That the Pope ſhould approve what they had done. The good Biſhop ſupported a very ridiculous part in this ſcene: it is not known whether he approved it, or found it of no uſe to oppoſe his ſingle authority. Rienzi, after having diſmiſſed the people, took poſſeſſion of the palace,

from whence he drove out the ſenators, and dictated his laws from the capitol.

THERE never was an example of a revolution ſo quick, ſo tranquil, and ſo ſingular in all its circumſtances. The great lords of Rome had regarded Rienzi as a buffoon, who diverted the people by his wit: and even the Colonnas invited him to their palace for their amuſement, and looked upon him as a fool. What was the aſtoniſhment of old Stephen Colonna, when he learned what had paſſed! He came to Rome, and expreſſed his diſcontent. Rienzi, by a writing, ordered him to leave Rome directly. Stephen took the writing and tore it, ſaying, I will have that fool thrown from the windows of the capitol. But perceiving that the commotion was general, and they were going to ſurround his palace, he mounted his horſe, and retired to Paleſtine, where his family reſided.

ſided. He had ſcarcely time to ſtop at St. Laurent, to eat a morſel of bread.

Rienzi in the mean while publiſhed the ſtricteſt orders for the puniſhment of all the public malefactors, and all known villains; and this neceſſary ſeverity gained him the hearts of the people, to which he joined an exact juſtice in the regulation of public affairs. The noiſe of this tranſaction ſoon ſpread over Europe. The Court of Avignon was ſeized with a panic terror, but when they read the letters ſent by Rienzi and the biſhop of Orvietti, whom they had obliged to write in concert with him, they were a little re-aſſured. Theſe letters breathed nothing but zeal for the church, diſintereſtedneſs, and the deliverance of Rome from miſery and oppreſſion; and concluded by requeſting the confirmation of an authority he had only accepted at the will of his holineſs, and which he meant to exerciſe in conjunction with his vicar. The court

of the Pope, though extremely ſhocked at this enterpriſe, thought it beſt to diſſemble and appear to approve what they could not prevent.

THE Pope confirmed Rienzi with the biſhop in their rights, exhorting them to merit the continuance of his protection and regard. Rienzi then required the people to inveſt him with an authority which ſhould render him independent of any but themſelves, under the title of tribune, and to aſſociate the Pope's vicar with him: the people aſſented to this, and proclaimed both of them with the greateſt acclamations. Rienzi, informed by his ſpies that the nobles he had baniſhed to their caſtles held ſecret aſſemblies, cited them to his tribunal, and they were forced to obey. Stephen Colonna the younger was the firſt, and appeared extremely moved; he obliged him and the other lords to an oath, that they would never take up arms againſt him or the

the Roman people. After this he determined to make an example of terror of a young nobleman, who was immerſed in vice, and deteſted for his acts of violence. He was the nephew of two cardinals, and had been himſelf a ſenator. Rienzi had him taken by force out of his palace; they tore him from the arms of a young widow to whom he was juſt married, and dragged him to the capitol, where he was judged, condemned and executed the ſame day, almoſt under the eyes of his wife. From her windows ſhe could ſee the body of her huſband hanging at the poſt, where he remained two days. He cut off the head of another lord, who had done ſomething againſt his orders; and then dragged to priſon in open day Peter Agapit Colonna, who had been ſenator that year. Theſe examples rendered the nobles more circumſpect and complying. After theſe tranſactions Rienzi reformed all the public abuſes; the ſucceſs of his endeavours was incredible;

the highways became ſure; the people reſumed the cultivation of the lands; pilgrims came and went in ſafety; commerce revived, and even the markets and ſhops became ſchools of ſincerity and truth. A Bologneſe returning from Babylon, where he had been ſlave of the Sultan, ſaid; that this prince having heard there had appeared an extraordinary man at Rome who did juſtice and protected the people, cried out in diſorder, "that Mahomet and Elias were come to the ſuccour of Jeruſalem." Rienzi now ſent couriers to all the ſtates of Italy; his view was to unite and form them into one great republic under Rome. Many of them entered into his views, and what was more flattering, the king of Hungary ſent a ſolemn embaſſy to him to decide the affair of his brother Andrew's death. It was ſolemnly pleaded before Rienzi, who was ſeated on his throne, having his crown on his head, and in his hand a ſilver apple with a croſs; but

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he deferred giving judgment on a matter which muſt have armed againſt him one of the powers in diſpute. Philip of Valois, king of France, was almoſt the only power who was not dazzled by the ſudden elevation of the tribune, and who formed a juſt idea of his character.

The letters of Petrarch to Rienzi prove their union, and Petrarch's deteſtation of the inſupportable tyranny exerciſed by the nobility over the people. Moſt of theſe nobles were ſtrangers who came from the borders of the Rhine, the Rhone, from Spoletta, &c. to ſettle at Rome, and had taken from thoſe who had a right to them the public offices and honours. Their palaces in that city, and their caſtles in the country, were ſo many fortreſſes, where they ſhut themſelves up, and from whence they only made excurſions to commit all ſorts of violence and robbery; and Rienzi acted at firſt in the beſt man-

ner, and took the wiſeſt methods to deſtroy their tyranny.

AN enterpriſe ſo hardy as Rienzi's could not be executed without envy, and drawing a great number of enemies upon its author: he appeared often in a magnificent chapel, ſurrounded with iron bars, which he had built in the capitol, where divine ſervice was celebrated with all imaginable pomp, being ſeated on a ſort of throne, the barons of Rome ſtanding before him with their arms croſſed upon their breaſts, and their cowls let down on their backs; they were often ſeen in this humiliating ſituation. In the progreſs of theſe memoirs we ſhall find the dreadful conſequences of this tranſaction of Rienzi's. We ſhall here only ſubjoin Petrarch's firſt letter to him, and Rienzi's anſwer.

AFTER having exhorted the Romans to unite againſt the tyrants who oppreſſed them,

them, and pillaged from the public treaſure to enrich themſelves, and to concur with their tribune in the re-eſtabliſhment of the republic, Petrarch thus addreſſes himſelf to Rienzi:

"INTREPID man! who doſt alone ſupport the heavy weight of the republic, watch with more care over its bad citizens, than over its declared enemies. Modern Brutus! let the example of the antient be ever before you. He was a conſul: you are a tribune. Let hiſtory be conſulted, and it will be ſeen that the conſuls have ſometimes done atrocious things againſt the people. The tribunes, on the contrary, have always been their moſt zealous defenders. If the firſt conſul ſacrificed his own children to the liberty of his country, what ought we not to expect from a tribune. Be adviſed by me, and yield nothing to friendſhip or to blood, but hold as your worſt enemy whoever is the enemy of the public freedom.

dom. Illuſtrious man! The Romans and their poſterity will owe to you the happineſs of living and of dying free!"

"I HAD two requeſts to make you. The firſt of them I learn you have already fulfilled, and that you undertake nothing without firſt ſtrengthening your ſoul in receiving the body of the Lord with the requiſite diſpoſitions of mind. I cannot enough commend this devout practice, which I meant to propoſe to you, My ſecond deſire was, That you ſhould imitate Auguſtus, who employed that ſmall portion of time which he could gain from his public occupations, in reading or hearing the hiſtory of thoſe great men whoſe characters might ſerve as models for himſelf."

"WHY can I not unite with you to procure ſo great a good? But my ſituation will not permit me: by my pen alone can I diſcharge my duty as a citizen.

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If you perſevere as you have begun, you will hear me ſing your praiſe in a higher key, and ſpread your fame throughout the world. You have laid excellent foundations; juſtice, truth, peace, and liberty. In your letters are ſeen the greatneſs of your courage, and the dignity of the Roman people, without invading the reſpect due to the ſovereign Pontiff. Your expreſſions, though firm, are modeſt; they have nothing in them either of a ſlaviſh fear, or a fooliſh preſumption; and it is doubtful whether your actions or ſtyle are moſt to be admired. They ſay you ſpeak like Cicero, while you act like Brutus. You ought to conſider yourſelf as a man placed on an eminence, from whence he is expoſed not only to the diſcourſes and criticiſms of men who now exiſt, but of all thoſe who ſhall ſucceed them. If I am not deceived, you will be always ſpoken of, but in a very different manner, according to the variety of human opinion. But I am perſuaded

perſuaded nothing can make you abandon ſo glorious a cauſe. The edifice that you raiſe will be ſolid, and thoſe who attempt to overthrow it will be overthrown themſelves. I approve your method of preſerving minutes of your letters, that you may avoid all contradiction in what you are ſaying and what you have ſaid. Write as if all the world were to read."

"ADIEU! deliverer of Rome."

RIENZI ſent this anſwer to Petrarch:

"NICHOLAS, Severe and Clement, Tribune of liberty, peace and juſtice, and the illuſtrious deliverer of the ſacred republic of Rome, to the noble and virtuous Signior Francis Petrarch, worthily crowned Poet, and our very dear fellow-citizen, health, honour, and perfect joy."

"YOUR amiable letter, full of rhetorical

rical flowers and juſt reaſoning, has enchanted all thoſe who have read or heard it. Your exhortations, founded on ſolid motives and the examples of the greateſt men of antiquity, delight and animate to virtue. We know you too well not to render juſtice to your prudence and goodneſs, or to doubt the ſincerity of your ſentiments for us and for the city. We ſee clearly in your letter your attachment, and your zeal for the good ſtate of Rome. We love you, and ſo do all the Romans; and we wiſh we were able to contribute to your advancement and happineſs. Would to God you were at Rome; your preſence would decorate that city, as a precious ſtone adorns the ring of gold in which it is ſet. The ſoul of this people is liberty, the ſweetneſs of which they begin to taſte."

"THINGS will naturally return to their former ſtate. This city, after having ſuffered for ſeveral ages the moſt cruel bondage,

bondage, beholds, praiſe be to God, its chains at preſent broken. There is no peril, no death to which the Romans would not expoſe themſelves, to preſerve the precious good in which they now rejoice. Be perſuaded that you will find us always ready to do every thing that can contribute to your ſatisfaction."

"GIVEN in the capitol where juſtice reigns, and where we live with uprightneſs of heart, the 28th of July, the firſt year of the deliverance of the republic."

RIENZI after this wrote to the Pope, that all he did was by the command of God, and under the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt. "It would have been impoſſible for me, ſays he, to have reduced to ſubmiſſion the power of the greateſt of tyrants, of princes, in ſo ſhort a time, or even to have conceived the idea of ſo noble a work, but from a divine operation."

Rienzi then informed the Pope, that he had raiſed three hundred thouſand florins in a tax on ſalt, which paid nothing before. This news would not have diſpleaſed a court where luxury and magnificence rendered money ſo neceſſary, had not the tribune applied this augmentation of the revenue to ſupply the troops whom he held in pay for the maintenance of his own power, under the ſpecious pretext of the public ſafety. In this letter he makes the ſtrongeſt proteſtations of reſpect, attachment and obedience to the Pope, whom he acknowledges for his ſovereign: whenever he ſpeaks of the city of Rome, or the Roman people, he ſays always, your city, your people. It is to this letter Petrarch alludes when he praiſes the ſtyle and ſentiments of Rienzi, who covered, under this artful veil of ſubmiſſion, his uſurpation of the Pope's authority.

Petrarch paſſed the month of September

tember at Avignon. The ninth of that month he obtained Letters of legitimation for his ſon John, who was about ten years of age. He is called in theſe letters a ſcholar of Florence, and qualified by them to poſſeſs any benefice without the neceſſity of mentioning this blot on his birth, or the diſpenſation obtained from the Pope. We ſee by theſe letters that the mother of John was not a married woman, which juſtifies Petrarch from adultery.

NOTHING was now talked of at Avignon but the follies of Rienzi, with his increaſe of power and ſucceſs: he became vain and inſolent; his head was not ſtrong enough to bear ſo quick a riſe from the moderate to the moſt elevated fortune: he was blinded by power and intoxicated with wealth, and paſſed all at once from the greateſt ſimplicity to an exceſs of magnificence and oſtentation, little ſuited to his former declarations and the part he had

had undertaken to ſupport: he affected the airs of a ſovereign, an extreme luxury in his cloaths and in his furniture, and his table was covered with dainties ſought from diſtant climates, and the moſt rare and exquiſite wines. His wife, who was young and handſome, never appeared in the ſtreets without the moſt ſplendid train; a choſen band of youth formed her guard, ladies of the firſt quality attended her, and young damſels walked before her, fanning off the flies and cooling the air. All the relations of Rienzi forgot their original, and imitated this parade. His uncle, who was brought up a barber, never walked abroad without a cavalcade of the principal citizens. To compleat all, Rienzi took it into his head he would be made a knight, without reflecting that this affected title of nobility claſhed with his oath as Tribune; and he gave orders that the pomp of this ceremony ſhould equal the triumphs of antient Rome. No

ſpectacle was ever more ſumptuous: it drew to Rome an incredible multitude of ſpectators, who confeſſed nothing equal to it had ever been ſeen; and above all they admired the order that reigned through the whole. It was a cuſtom for thoſe who would be made knights to bathe themſelves the preceding evening. Rienzi, who would do every thing in a new manner, took it into his head to bathe himſelf in a baſon of porphyry in the church of St. John de Lateran, in which it was thought the emperor Conſtantine bathed after being cured of his leproſy, by pope Sylveſter; he would have his bed alſo placed in that part of the church ſurrounded with columns of St. John. As he was ſtepping into this bed a circumſtance happened which appeared ominous. The bed, though new, ſunk under him. The day after he was made knight, he went to hear maſs in the chapel of Pope Boniface, ſeated upon a throne ſurround-

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ed with all the nobility of Rome. They obſerved in this maſs, the ſolemnities uſed at the conſecration of kings. In the midſt of theſe ſacred myſteries, Rienzi advanced toward the people, and ſaid, with a loud voice, We cite to our Tribunal Lewis, Duke of Bavaria, and Charles, king of Bohemia, to judge of their pretenſions to the empire, and the princes, who call themſelves electors, to produce the titles of their right to ſuch election, which, as I find in the archives, belongs to the people of Rome. The Pope's vicar, who was preſent, and did not expect ſuch an extravagance as this, remained for a time confounded; but recollecting himſelf, he thought it his duty to make his proteſtations againſt it by a notary: while they were reading them, the tribune ordered the inſtruments to ſound, that they might not be heard. Fifteen days after this, Rienzi was crowned again with ſeven crowns, and with the ſame pomp, in the

church of St. John de Lateran. Theſe ſeven crowns were alluſions to the ſeven gifts of the Holy Ghoſt. When theſe feaſts were over, the people's eyes were opened, and they reflected with concern on the profanation of the churches, the inſolent citation of the emperors and electors, and the inſupportable pride and luxury of Rienzi and his relations.

PETRARCH was at Avignon while theſe things paſſed, and either did not hear of them, or his enthuſiaſm for the liberty of Rome, the period of which he flattered himſelf was haſtening under the government of Rienzi, did not ſuffer him to believe them: he was engaged alſo at this time in the news received from the kingdom of Naples, which was in great commotion.

LEWIS, king of Hungary, was determined to purſue and puniſh the murderers of his brother. Clement VI. fulmi-

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nated againſt them the moſt terrible bulls, and appointed Bertrand de Bouſe great juſticiary of the kingdom, to proceed openly againſt them; but in private letters he ordered him to keep ſecret the informations he ſhould gain; that in caſe the Queen or the Princes of the blood ſhould be found guilty, he might acquaint the Pope, who ſhould reſerve to himſelf their judgment, to ſave the troubles it might cauſe to that kingdom. The greateſt part of thoſe guilty were diſcovered and puniſhed. Queen Joan could not ſave the three principal perſons, the Cataneſe, Robert de Cabones and Soncia, and their cabal: they gave them the torture in a place by the ſea, in ſight of all the people; but a rail prevented their depoſitions being heard. The Cataneſe could not ſupport the agonies of the torture; ſhe died before ſhe got to the place of execution; Robert and Soncia had their fleſh torn off with red hot irons; they had put gags in their mouths

to prevent their ſpeaking. This was not enough to ſatisfy the king of Hungary. He conſidered the Queen and the two Princes, who were his couſins, as the real authors of his brother's murder, and finding that neither the Pope nor the Tribune would act in this affair, he determined to tranſport himſelf with an army to Naples. To impreſs the more terror, he had a black ſtandard carried before him, on which was painted the ſtrangled figure of his brother Andrew. He ſent a natural brother of his before him to beſiege the city of Sulmone. Petrarch was ſtill at Avignon, when he was informed that the Hungarians had entered Italy, and were ſet down before Sulmone: this made him very uneaſy for the fate of his friend Barbatus, who reſided at Sulmone, ſince the death of king Robert; and he wrote him the following letter:

"In the midſt of the cares which overwhelm me, your ſituation is my greateſt

uneaſineſs. I love no one more than my dear Barbatus; I feel this ſtrongly at preſent. Love is credulous, timid and reſtleſs; it fears every thing. What I long predicted is now come to paſs. I always ſaid a crime ſo horrid could not remain unpuniſhed: but what have the people of Italy done, who are going to be the victim. God, who revenges the guilty, will not puniſh the innocent; but I need not fear for Italy; the rebels on the contrary will be treated as they merit, while the tribunal now eſtabliſhed ſhall be in vigour. My apprehenſions are for Naples, that Queen of cities, and Capua formerly ſo powerful; torrents from the ſhores of the Danube are coming down on that flouriſhing country. A tempeſt from the North always covers it with thick clouds; for I learn hoſtilities are begun, and that Sulmone your country, and the country of Ovid, is to be the firſt victim. What would Ovid ſay if he was to behold the Barbarians, he deſpiſed and hated, govern that city which gave him birth? Would it

not have been better that his bones had been covered with their earth, than his monument inſulted in the middle of his country? but grief makes me wander: I tremble for you. I do not ſee wherein I can ſuccour you; but ſometimes more can be done than is perceived. Command me as you have a right: I have ſome influence with the Roman people and the tribune. If I can be of any uſe to you with them, diſpoſe of my mind and of my pen; both the one and the other are at your ſervice."

"I HAVE a houſe in a diſtant and tranquil corner of Italy: it is ſmall, but large enough for two perſons who have only one heart and one ſoul. Riches and poverty are both baniſhed from this manſion, and the door of it is ſhut againſt licentiouſneſs; it is filled with good books, and wants my preſence; I have been abſent from it two years. Come, and ſeek in it an aſylum. Whatever happens, I ſhall

ſhall never be eaſy till I know your life to be in ſafety."

Petrarch thought of quitting Avignon again, and returning to Italy. "I am prevented, ſays he, by my old comrades who would drag me for ever to aſſemblies: in vain I tell them ſuch places no longer amuſe me. A thouſand paths of ambition or avarice are pointed out to me: when I ſay I am content with my lot and deſire nothing beyond it, they maintain that I am playing a farce. I cannot even obtain from my taylor that my cloaths ſhould be wider, or from my ſhoe-maker an eaſy pair of ſhoes. I find but one remedy for all my evils: a little corner of the earth where I may live as I pleaſe, and be no longer what I have been. Change of air is of uſe to the ſick: ingrafting ſoftens the ſap of the tree: roots are perfected by tranſplanting; and, I think, contrary to the opinion of the world, we ought not to become old where

we have been young." The love of his country and his diſlike to Avignon were the motives which engaged Petrarch to return to Italy, and balanced in his heart his love for Laura. All the lords of Italy had wrote to deſire he would come among them; and among theſe James de Carrore, who was become governor of Padua, a man of great merit, invited Petrarch in the moſt obliging manner to come and ſettle at Padua.

LEWIS of Gonzague, the lord of Mantua, had ſent alſo to Petrarch a man in his confidence with a ſum of money to engage him to come to him at Mantua; to which Petrarch wrote this anſwer:

"I WOULD have brought you my thanks for your letter, but it is not in my power. I grow old in this place, and am the ſport of fortune. I return your money by Peter de Creme your gentleman, becauſe I am not at liberty to comply

comply with your desire. I am hastening to my goal, unable to bear the fatigues of a long journey. My soul, wounded by love, cannot tear itself from Avignon. Was I to come to you, so far from being of any use, I should be only a burden. Frequent indispositions and an habitual melancholy require relief from others, and allow not the attention necessary for a courtier. However, you may chance to see me in the spring, if Cardinal Colonna will permit. In the mean time, let not your benefits go beyond my wishes or deserts: your generosity would not justify your imprudence."

Petrarch had friends at Florence, who invited him to return to his country, and gave him hopes the estate of his family, which had been confiscated when his father was exiled, would be restored to him again. He had left his son John at Verona, and he wished to see him

and

and judge of the progreſs he made in his ſtudies: he was now above ten years of age, and his education became very intereſting to Petrarch. And though Rienzi had loſt much of his glory, Petrarch was not entirely cured of his enthuſiaſm towards him, and he had even thoughts of going to Rome to encourage him in his purſuit of liberty. All theſe motives united, having determined Petrarch to quit France and ſettle in Italy, he went to communicate his deſign to the Pope, and to know his commands.

CLEMENT loved Petrarch. He looked upon him as an ornament to his court, and wiſhed to fix him there. He had offered him with this view ſeveral conſiderable benefices, which he had always refuſed, ſaying, he was not worthy of them. And the Pope had condeſcended ſo far, as to entreat him earneſtly to accept them. But it was to no purpoſe,

Petrarch

Petrarch would take no employment which ſhould deprive him of liberty.

"You refuſe all my offers, ſaid the Pope; aſk what you will, and you ſhall obtain it."

"Holy Father, replied Petrarch, ſince you are determined to ſerve me, I reſign to your pleaſure, and leave it to you to chooſe for me. You know better than I do what will ſuit my diſpoſition and your liberality. When any place of that kind ſhall become vacant, vouchſafe to remember your ſervant."

This conſtant refuſal of all the dignities offered him, will appear to many perſons incredible. But a letter he wrote to Socrates, from whom he hid no ſecret of his heart, proves the truth of this beyond a doubt:

"I continue unſhaken in my reſolution.

lution. Whether it is modeſty or meanneſs, or whether it is courage and ſtrength of mind, as ſome perſons of merit have thought, I have never deſired a great fortune. All the world knows this: and you can witneſs it more perfectly than any one. You have ſometimes praiſed, and ſometimes blamed me for it, according to circumſtances. You have ſaid to me, Do not you fear that your firmneſs will be eſteemed obſtinacy? I have not yet, however, repented my conduct. Every elevated ſituation is a ſuſpicious one; there is a fall beneath it. If I am indulged with that mediocrity preferable to gold, of which Horace ſpeaks, and which has been promiſed me, I will accept it with pleaſure and gratitude. But if they will give me a heavy charge, I will perſiſt in refuſing it, and ſhake off the yoke. I prefer poverty to ſlavery. But I need not fear the former, as things go at preſent. You are fully informed of my determination; ſpeak of it to our friends, and to the lord of

lords

lords when you ſhall find occaſion. I have never hid my thoughts; but there are people who muſt be told the ſame thing often to underſtand it. Your eloquence will reach them. One ſpeaks with more force, and is liſtened to more favourably, for a friend than for one's ſelf. Make them feel that true liberality is neither ſlow, crabbed, nor unwilling, and thinks only of the perſon it would oblige; and that it bends to their deſires inſtead of limiting them. The offer of treaſures to a man who aſks a ſmall ſum, is a decent method of refuſing him."

The moderation of Petrarch was not greater than the bounty and condeſcenſion of the Pope. He muſt have heard his declamations againſt the court of Avignon, and free expreſſions concerning himſelf, and the intereſt he took in the enterpriſe of Rienzi for the Roman liberty. It muſt be owned that Clement deſerved the name he bore.

PETRARCH ſpent a good part of the autumn at Vaucluſe, to prepare for his departure to Italy, and re-eſtabliſh his health, which had been much diſordered.

BEFORE he left Avignon, he went to take leave of Laura. He found her at an aſſembly ſhe often frequented. "She was ſeated, ſays he, in the midſt of thoſe ladies who are her general companions, and appeared like a beautiful roſe in a parterre, ſurrounded with flowers ſmaller and leſs blooming. Her air was more touching than uſual. She was dreſſed perfectly plain, and without pearls, garlands, or any gay colours. Though ſhe was not melancholy, ſhe did not appear with her uſual chearfulneſs. She was ſerious and thoughtful. She did not ſing as uſual, nor ſpeak with that ſweetneſs which charmed every one. She had the air of a perſon who fears an evil not yet arrived. In taking leave, I ſought in her looks a conſolation for my own

own ſufferings. Her eyes had an expreſſion I had never ſeen before in them. I depoſited to their keeping my heart and my thoughts, as to faithful friends on whom I could with ſafety depend. Her altered cloaths and air, her countenance, a certain concern mixed with grief which I ſaw in her face, predicted the ſorrows that threatened me."

When Petrarch ſaw Laura in this ſituation, he could hardly reſtrain his tears. Laura knew not how to bear a ſeparation from this friend of her heart, whom ſhe was to loſe perhaps for ever. When the hour of this ſeparation came, ſhe caſt upon him a look ſo ſoft, tender, and pure, that he confeſſes he had never been ſo touched before. "Muſt I never, ſays Petrarch, never ſee again that beautiful face, thoſe kind looks which relieve the tender heart?

While theſe things were paſſing at

Avignon, and Petrarch was re-eſtabliſhing his health at Vaucluſe, Rienzi no longer kept any meaſures with the court of Rome. Intoxicated more and more, he undertook to exterminate the great lords of Rome. Some hiſtorians ſay, he bribed a perſon to aſſaſſinate them, who afterwards avowed the plot. However this was, he invited a great number of them to dine with him, under the pretence of aſking their advice: and had ſome of them taken by force, and put into the capital priſons. Among theſe were old Stephen Colonna, and John his grandſon, Peter Agapit Colonna, the Urſines, and other great barons of Rome. They paſſed the night in agonies, uncertain what would be the fate prepared for them. Old Stephen, ſhut up in an empty hall where there was no bed, walked backward and forward with a quick ſtep all night, knocking often and beſeeching the guard in vain either to open the door or to kill him. What a night for ſuch a hero!

hero! who after having eſcaped a glorious death in battle, ſees himſelf on the point of ending his days by the ſcrivener and the hangman.

The next day the Tribune had the bell of the capitol ſounded, which aſſembled the people. The great hall was hung with red and white ſilk, the common ſignal of Rienzi's executions.

He ſent to each baron a cordelier, to confeſs and give them the ſacrament. Their conſternation was ſo extreme, when they found the Tribune had condemned them to death, and that they muſt prepare for it, that they loſt the power of ſpeech. The greateſt part of them however ſubmitted, and received the communion: but Stephen Colonna refuſed, ſaying, he was not in a proper ſituation. Some Romans however perſuaded Rienzi not to put theſe nobles to death. He brought them therefore before the peo-

ple, and mounting the tribunal, ſaid it was owing to the favour of the people, to whom he made them bow, and ſwear future fidelity. The next day he made them dine with him, and loaded them with preſents, and after dinner they attended him as in cavalcade through the ſtreets of Rome.

When theſe nobles were at liberty, they retired into their caſtles, and meditated the means of revenge. The people who revolted againſt Rienzi's proceedings, joined by degrees with theſe lords, and promiſed to let them into the town, when a proper occaſion ſhould offer: for Rienzi having heard of the revolt, had ordered the gates to be ſhut. In a too precipitate attempt to force an entrance, young John Colonna, not followed as he imagined by his party, was pulled off his horſe, and had a ſword plunged three times into his breaſt, ſo that he died upon the ſpot. His birth,

youth,

youth, and beauty could not touch theſe barbarians. This was the youth who received Petrarch at Paleſtrina, and was newly married to a very amiable and beautiful woman. He was only twenty years of age. Stephen Colonna his father, who was at the head of the rear-guard, being come to the gate of the city, and ſeeing the populace aſſembled, as if he had a pre-ſentiment of his misfortune, aſked where his ſon was. As no one replied, he puſhed his horſe under the gate-way, where by the ſide of the wall lay the body of this young man ſo dear to him, covered over with blood. Seized with horror at this mournful ſight, he turned about in haſte, and was going away; but paternal tenderneſs brought him back again, to ſee if his ſon had any remains of life. Perceiving him without motion, trembling with grief and rage he was returning, when an enormous machine fell upon him from a tower, and he was ſurrounded by the enemy,

who pierced him with wounds. Encouraged by the death of theſe two perſons, they came out of the city without order, and fell upon the troops who were filing off. Peter Agapit Colonna was their next victim: he had fallen from his horſe, and ſought his ſafety in flight; but the rain, which had made the ground ſlippery, and the weight of his arms which he wore for the firſt time, were great hindrances to his deſign, and he was taken among ſome vines under which he lay concealed: his prayers and tears could not ſave his life; they maſſacred him in cold blood. Two others of this family periſhed on this fatal day.

THE tribune went to the church of St. Mary to thank God for this ſucceſs, and alluding to the death of the Colonna's, he ſaid, "I have this day cut off an ear which neither the Pope nor Emperor was ever able to accompliſh." The bodies of the Colonna's were carried to the church

church of the monaſtery of St. Mary d' Ara Celi, wherein was their chapel: that of Stephen was ſo disfigured, it could not have been known but for ſome ſigns of life ſtill remaining. Several ladies related to them ran in grief to the chapel, to pay their laſt duty and attend their funeral rites. Rienzi ordered his guards to drive them out of the church, and would not allow theſe illuſtrious perſons any obſequies: he even threatned to have their bodies dragged to the place allotted for thoſe of malefactors. This obliged them to convey them ſecretly to the church of St. Sylveſter; and the Nuns of that houſe (which was founded by the Colonna's for thoſe relations who choſe to take the veil) buried them there without the uſual rites.

When old Stephen Colonna, who was more than fourſcore and ten years old, was informed of theſe dreadful loſſes, he did not ſhed a tear, or ſuffer a ſigh to eſcape

him; he only ſaid with his eyes fixed on the earth, "The will of God be done. Is it not better to die, than groan under the yoke of a madman?"

It is Petrarch that relates this, to whom we will now return.

He ſet out from Vaucluſe the 20th of November 1347, leaving his friend Socrates in his little houſe. Their ſeparation was extremely affecting. Petrarch took the road to Genoa, becauſe it was the neareſt way to Florence, where ſome friends waited for him. The evening before his departure, he received a letter from Lelius, who informed him of the news received at Avignon, concerning Rienzi's miſconduct and follies. At a town where he ſtopped before he reached Genoa, Petrarch returned this anſwer to Lelius;

"I am ſo fatigued, I cannot write

you a long letter. This is the third night I have paſſed without ſleep. My employments, and the buſtle of removing, have ſcarcely ſuffered me to breathe. My reſt will never be compoſed, till I can bring my mind to ſee every thing with an equal eye. I am now far upon my road. Nothing is ſo painful as a long deliberation on the conduct we ſhall purſue. On the contrary, nothing is more delightful than the ſtate of that ſoul, which after having been long reſtleſs and uneaſy, is come at laſt to a fixed determination. The *end of doubt* is the *beginning of repoſe*."

"It was a thunder-ſtroke to me to receive your account of the Tribune. I have nothing to reply. I feel the deſtiny of my country; on whatever ſide I turn there is cauſe to mourn. Rome torn to pieces, Italy disfigured: what will become of me in theſe public diſorders? Others may contribute their ſtrength, their

their riches, their power, or their counſel: I can offer nothing but my tears."

WHEN Petrarch arrived at Genoa, he wrote a letter to Rienzi, reproaching him with his change of conduct:

"I HAVE often applied to you the words of Scipio Africanus in Cicero, "Who is it that flatters my ears with ſuch agreeable news?" Oblige me not to ſay at preſent, Who is it wounds my ears by ſuch unhappy rumours? You alone can tarniſh the luſtre of your reputation; the foundation of your glory can only be deſtroyed by yourſelf. You know the path you have taken to riſe; it is by the oppoſite path you muſt fall. You are not ignorant that it is more eaſy to incur the one, than to accompliſh the other. You had arrived at the ſummit of virtue and glory; ſtand firm, and ſuffer not your enemies to exult, or your friends to grieve at your deſtruction. It is not eaſy

long

long to preſerve a great reputation. I wrote an ode in your praiſe; conſtrain me not to place a ſatire in its room. I ſhould not addreſs you thus without good reaſon. But I learn things that oblige me to change my opinion concerning you; and that force me to ſay what Cicero ſaid of Brutus, 'I bluſh for you! You was the protector and ſupport of the good; you are now becoming the chief of vagabonds.' What a ſudden, what an unforeſeen change! God is incenſed againſt us! What is become of the good genius which inſpired you; or to ſpeak the language of the people, that familiar Spirit with whom you had ſo many ſecret converſations, and who enabled you to do things above the ſtrength of man? But about what am I tormenting myſelf! I cannot over-rule the deſtinies: the things of this world will be determined by the decrees of the Eternal. God grant, however, I may not live to ſee this change."

"I WAS

"I was haſtening to you; but I ſhall change my rout. Rome, dear country, adieu! I ſhall ſee you no more. I would ſooner go to the furtheſt Eaſt, if what I have learned is true. But ought I to believe it? Is it poſſible that ſo good a beginning ſhould be followed by ſo bad an end? Ah! would to Heaven I may have been deceived: with what pleaſure ſhould I retract my error! You ſee I ſeek to ſolace my grief by doubt: was it not for this, I ſhould ſpeak to you with ſtill more ſeverity. Falſehood is become a common and a venial ſin: but nothing can expiate his crime who betrays his country. If you regard not your own reputation (which I can ſcarcely believe) have yet ſome conſideration for mine. You ſee what a ſtorm threatens, what a crowd of cenſurers are gathering round me; be again yourſelf while you may: examine what you have been; what you are; from whence you aroſe; whither your actions tend; what are the offices

you

you ſhould fill up; and you will find that you are the miniſter, not the maſter of the republic."

Instead of going to Florence, as Petrarch intended, he went to Parma; there he received the account of the dreadful cataſtrophe that had befallen the houſe of the Colonnas. We do not readily believe afflicting news; but when he ſaw the letters that confirmed it, he was overwhelmed with grief: he had ever a tender friendſhip for young Stephen, and compared him to Marcellus the grandſon of Auguſtus, whom Virgil has ſo finely praiſed, and who was the delight of the Romans. He wrote on this occaſion a long letter to cardinal Colonna in the ſtyle of Seneca, full of dry ſentences and perplexed periods, according to the faſhion of thoſe times for letters of condolance. News was now brought to Parma that the tribune abandoning himſelf to all kinds of injuſtice, the people roſe againſt him

him and hung him up in effigy on the walls of his palace. He went from Rome to Naples to ſeek the protection of the king of Hungary; his wife eſcaped in the habit of a nun and went to him there. The terror of him was ſo great that the lords who were abſent from Rome, in their own caſtles, did not venture, till three days were paſſed after his departure, to return again into the city.

1348. PETRARCH went in January to Verona, where his friends and his ſon impatiently expected him. On the twenty-fifth of this month, being in his library, he felt the ground tremble under him, and heard a hollow noiſe; the walls ſhook, and the books were thrown from the ſhelves: he went out of his room terribly alarmed, and ſaw his ſervants and the people of Verona running here and there in the greateſt conſternation. They cried out aloud, perſuaded that the world was at an end. All cotemporary hiſtorians

ſpeak

ſpeak of this earthquake; they agree that it began in the Alps. It did great miſchief at Piſa, Bologna, Padua and Venice, but ſtill more in Tyrol and Bavaria, where whole towns were buried in ruins. More than ſixty villages in one canton were deſtroyed by the fall of two mountains. A comet preceded, and the plague came after this dreadful earthquake. It is generally agreed that the plague came originally from Cathoy (ſo they then called China) and from Tartary; in the ſpace of a year it deſolated Aſia; from Aſia it paſſed to Africa, where it made great havock. It was reported of Albacheſer, who was lord of almoſt all Barbary, that being on a journey to look at a road which he was making through the deſerts of Babylon to paſs to the Indies, they came to inform him the plague was in his kingdom, that fourſcore of his wives were already dead of it, and a great number of his courtiers. The idea ſtruck him, that this plague was a

puniſhment from heaven, becauſe he was not a chriſtian; and he ſent his admiral to notify it throughout his kingdom, that he would be baptized. A little after this, an European veſſel landing on his coaſt, he aſked what was the condition of the chriſtian world? They told him that the plague deſtroyed a great many; and he altered his mind about baptiſm when he found that Chriſtians died as well as Saracens. The contagion was carried into Europe by ſome Genoeſe and Catalonian merchants, who came from Syria and traded to the Indies: they diſembarked with their infected merchandiſe in Sicily, and from thence at Piſa and Genoa, from whence the mortality ſpread all over Europe. From Marſeilles and Catalonia it came into Spain and France; 1348 and 1349 it ravaged the borders of the ocean and the iſlands. In 1350 it extended to Germany and all the north; ſo that in three years it ſpread univerſally.

SINCE

Since the deluge, hiſtory furniſhes no example of ſo dreadful a ſcourge. Various but chimerical have been the cauſes to which it was aſcribed, as from fire coming out of the earth, from whence iſſued a corruption that infected the air, and inſects rained from heaven. "And ſome aſcribed it to the operation of the heavenly bodies, ſays Boccace, when they ought to have imputed it to the anger of God for our enormous iniquities." With ſome it began by bleeding at the noſe, a ſign of inevitable death; with others, by ſwellings of the ſize of an egg or apple under their arms, which ſoon after mortified, and diſperſed over the body in black or blue ſpots. Few lived beyond the third day, ſome died on the firſt, commonly without any fever. It proved beyond the art of the wiſeſt phyſician to cure this deſperate malady. In France and Germany, where the Jews were mortally hated, they accuſed them of having poiſoned the fountains, and

ſome of having gone to the Indies on purpoſe to bring the plague to the Chriſtians; and they were cruelly perſecuted on this account. Some ſuſpected the poor eunuchs, and others the nobles, of this evil. Clement the VI. whoſe underſtanding and knowledge raiſed him above all vulgar prejudices, and particularly thoſe of that age, took the part of the Jews with great warmth; and he publiſhed two bulls, by which, after vindicating them from this enormous crime, he forbade any one to proſecute or force them to be baptiſed.

When Petrarch returned to Parma in March 1348, this contagion was got into Italy, but not ſpread far. He brought with him his ſon John, to place him under Gilbert de Parme, an excellent grammarian, and to have him under his own eye.

Luchin Viscomti, lord of Milan, and

and who had obtained the lordſhip of Parma, wrote a very obliging letter at this time to Petrarch. He was valiant, and governed his ſtates with wiſdom. It appears that he was the moſt powerful lord in Italy, and even in Europe. He reigned over ſeventeen great cities, and had always in pay four or five thouſand troopers. His nephews and ſome of the Milaneſe nobles having conſpired againſt him, it had alarmed him ſo much that he had always too maſtiff dogs to follow him, who at the leaſt ſign from their maſter devoured thoſe he pointed to; and they always ſlept at the door of his chamber. His wife was of the illuſtrious family of Fieſque. She was the moſt beautiful woman of her age. Her love of dreſs and pleaſure was extreme: but ſhe had not that modeſty which heightens female charms. Proud of her rank, and fond of parade, ſhe delighted in nothing but feaſts and noiſy diverſions. Her love of intrigue was not for ſome time diſco-

vered by her huſband, who prevented even her deſires, by procuring her a ſucceſſion of brilliant entertainments. And on a vow ſhe had made to St. Mark, which ſhe went to fulfil at Venice, he prepared the ceremony for her, and ſhe embarked upon the Po, with a train of ſhips ornamented in ſo ſuperb a manner, that it reſembled the navigation of Cleopatra to meet Anthony. The handſomeſt lords and ladies of the court attended her. After traverſing the ſtates near the Po, ſhe paſſed Mantua, Verona, and Padua. They paid her the greateſt honours every where.

It is eaſy to imagine what muſt reſult from ſuch a medley of perſons of both ſexes, governed by a princeſs of ſo much gallantry. Iſabella kept no bounds, and moſt of her ladies followed her example, ſo that this was called the voluptuous navigation. Thoſe ladies who were more prudent than the reſt, revealed on their

return

return the moſt ſecret anecdotes of this expedition; and the huſbands had nothing to do but to conſole each other. Luchin Viſcomti was not the laſt informed of his wife's amours with Gonzague the lord of Mantua, and Dondoli the doge of Venice. He was more affected with this account than ſo great a man ought to have been; and though he was ſo fond of his wife, he reſolved to get rid of her, and exterminate the houſe of Gonzague. He was naturally melancholy, and became more gloomy than uſual. He was often ſeen with his brow bent, his looks wild, and biting his nails. Iſabella, who ſoon perceived by his outward manner what paſſed within, prepared for him a ſlow poiſon. Such was his ſituation when Petrarch came to Parma; to which was added a body tormented by the gout, and by the poiſon which circulated in his veins.

This unfortunate prince ſought con-

ſolation in the commerce of the Muſes, and the innocent pleaſures of his garden. When he heard of Petrarch's arrival in his ſtate, he wrote to aſk him for ſome plants from his garden, and ſome verſes from his Muſe, which flattered our poet, who returned the following anſwer:

"YOUR letter exceeds my hopes. I render thanks to fortune for the correſpondence of a great prince, who is willing to forget the inequality between us. While my gardener is collecting the plants, my Muſe ſhall produce the lines you aſk for. The pleaſure of ſerving you will render my labour eaſy. Your great ſoul, without ceaſing occupied in the moſt important affairs, will perhaps diſdain ſuch trifles. I know it is the manner of thinking in our age. But I know alſo that Cæſar and Auguſtus, thoſe maſters of the world, loved to repoſe in the boſom of the Muſes, and preferred their ſoft ſounds to that of drums and trumpets,

pets. I ſpeak not of Nero, the name of that monſter would ſully my tongue, and chaſe away the Muſes. The emperor Adrian was ſo devoted to them, that the approach of death did not prevent his compoſing; and even at the inſtant of ſeparation between his ſoul and body, he produced ſome very fine verſes."

"What ſhall I ſay of Antoninus, who obtained the empire by his merit, and would not quit the name of philoſopher for the title of emperor, perſuaded that the firſt was much ſuperior to the laſt? Formerly letters were thought neceſſary, not only to be a king, but to be a man. Times are ſadly changed, and kings now make war againſt letters."

"God forbid I ſhould name the ignorant kings of this age. Pollio ſaid, ſpeaking of Auguſtus, 'It is not ſafe to write againſt thoſe who can proſcribe. We muſt attack the dead alone, they

cannot forbid us.' As to me, I accuſe in general, and name no particular perſon. But the princes I ſpeak of copy the emperor Licinius, who ſaid that letters were a public peſt. Marius, though of a baſe origin, thought otherwiſe, and preferred the poets becauſe they could celebrate his exploits. And where is the man ſo baſe as not to love glory? Glory is acquired by virtue, but preſerved by letters. The memory fails, pictures are effaced, and ſtatues are broken: letters alone are a durable treaſure, which the people have taken from their princes, who have ceded to them the empire of wit. Wiſe men muſt therefore be ſought from the people, and not from thoſe kings who, as a Roman emperor calls them writing to a king of France, are only crowned aſſes. As for you, Sir, to whom nothing is wanting but the title of king, I hope every thing from you. If my verſes ſhould pleaſe you, you will find me more liberal of them than you

may

may imagine, or my occupations ſeem to promiſe."

In theſe verſes Petrarch addreſſes himſelf to the trees, from which ſuckers had been taken, in this manner:

"Happy trees! never forget the honour done you by a great prince, in "demanding ſome branches from your "ſtem. Who knows? Perhaps he will "hereafter vouchſafe to gather with his "kind hand the fruits theſe your children ſhall produce. All Italy admires "and reſpects this prince. The Alps "obey, the father Appennine labours "for him. The Po with its foamy "waves divides his rich eſtates, and, beholding on each ſide of their courſe "crowned ſerpents on elevated towers, "bend before their ſovereign. His empire ſpreads over both ſeas. The tranſalpine kingdoms fear, and would have "him for their maſter. He entraps

"crimes

" crimes in his nets, and repreſſes them " by the rein of his laws. He has re- " vived in Heſperia the golden age, and " made known at Milan the great art of " the Romans to pardon thoſe who ſub- " mit, and ſubdue all thoſe who refuſe " ſubmiſſion."

LUCHIN was of a ſevere character: but excepting that blemiſh, a great prince, and worthy of the praiſes of Petrarch. He made excellent laws, and underſtood how to enforce the practice of them. He protected the people againſt the oppreſſion of the great, purſued crimes with vigour, maintained plenty, and always carried on war out of his ſtates. He had great virtues, and great faults. His commerce with Petrarch did not laſt long: he died a martyr to jealouſy and the poiſon his wife had given him, the 23d of January 1349.

WHILE Petrarch was at Parma, he meditated

meditated a journey to Padua, to viſit James de Carrore, lord of that city, who had expreſſed ſo great a deſire to ſee him. He was juſt got there, when he received a letter from his friend Socrates, which informed him of the arrival of a young Florentine, his relation, called Franciſchin, whoſe father was one of the greateſt captains of his age. Franciſchin was a young man of an amiable heart: he was of a tender and affectionate temper, full of wit and poetic talents. He had preſented himſelf to Petrarch in 1345, as a relation and countryman. Petrarch became tenderly intereſted in him, and cultivated his taſte for poetry. This young Florentine would never have quitted Petrarch, but from a ſtrong deſire to ſee Paris, and make the tour of France. This was the paſſion of all the Italians who had wit and wiſhed to cultivate it, and the Florentines above all others. Brunetto, Latini, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccace, had ſet the faſhion of this journey.

ney. When he left Avignon, he promiſed Petrarch that if he was not there at his return, he would ſeek him wherever he ſhould be. He kept his word, and enquired immediately on his arrival for his maſter: they told him he was in Italy; on which he inſtantly embarked at Marſeilles, and got to Verona the 6th of April.

PETRARCH ſet out for Parma to meet this dear friend; and wrote theſe lines to John Anchiſee, a learned man in Florence, and the friend of Franciſchin:

"I EXPECT him every day. I have heard of him at Marſeilles, where he arrived in good health. He flattered himſelf with ſeeing me at Avignon; and I would have waited for him, but I could no longer ſupport that filthy court. He is a treaſure I know you die with envy to poſſeſs: but be aſſured, that when I again lay hold of him, I will hide him ſafe,

ſafe, for fear of loſing him. A good friend is more rare, and more precious than gold. We ought to pardon thoſe who poſſeſs one, for being avaricious and jealous of him. However, I conſent to ſhare him with you; but upon one condition, that you come and enjoy him here with me. I wiſh that friendſhip may engage you to take the ſtep I propoſe; you will be a gainer by it: inſtead of one, you will procure two friends. From the calm valley of the Parmeſan."

Petrarch was ſo impatient to ſee his dear Franciſchin, ſo fully perſuaded he would arrive every moment, that at the leaſt noiſe which he heard he quitted with precipitation his books and his pen to go out and meet him. What was his grief when he was told that this dear relation having ſtopped at Savona, near Genoa, was dead of a ſickneſs, either brought on by the fatigue of his journey, or by the contagion which began to ſpread over Italy!

Italy! He left an aged father, a mother, brothers, and ſiſters, all inconſolable for his loſs; for he was the delight of all his family. "I feel, ſaid Petrarch, it would be my duty to go and conſole them; but how can I do this, being inconſolable myſelf!"

A FEW days after this, Petrarch received a letter from Lancelot Angioſciola, a gentleman, a ſoldier, and a knight. His valour and his prudence gained him the love of the king of Bohemia, and many great lords of this time. One part of his letter is pleaſant enough. He aſks of Petrarch, who had been a martyr to love twenty years, a remedy for that paſſion.

"How conſoling is it for me, replies Petrarch, to find you attacked with my old diſeaſe. It appears no longer unworthy of me, nor do I bluſh for it: but I look upon your application to me for a cure,

cure, as a pleaſantry indeed! Every remedy that can be propoſed is only food for this paſſion: there is but one that our Eſculapius has diſcovered; but the ſimples of which it is compoſed are not in your garden, or are too bitter for your taſte. The only ſecret I have found to prevent the evils of life, is to do nothing without having well examined beforehand in what we are going to embark. In moſt things we undertake, the beginnings are agreeable; they ſeduce us; but we ſhould think of the end: they are paths ſtrewed with flowers; where theſe paths lead to, is the moſt important queſtion."

James de Caſtillonchio and Francis Bruni, two young men of cultivated underſtandings, ſent letters to Petrarch, and with them an oration of Cicero, which he conſidered as a valuable preſent; they expreſſed a great deſire to ſee his Africa. He anſwered, that his Africa withered for

want of watering and culture, and that the plague had silenced his muse: "it takes my friends, says he, and leaves me upon the earth; it is my fate at present to groan myself and reprimand the lamentation of others."

THE plague began now to spread in Italy; the contagion, as I have said, defied the art of all medicine: whether it was really incurable, or they were ignorant of the proper method of treating it; it communicated itself instantly to persons in full health, as the fire lays hold of dry and oily stuff which comes near it. It was caught by touching the cloaths of those who had it, or any thing that had been brought near them; and it extended to animals as well as men. 'I saw, says Boccace, from whom this and the former account is taken,' 'two swine groping with their snouts in the rags of a poor man who died of it, and they both expired soon after, as if they had taken

the moſt ſubtile poiſon. This dreadful calamity ſpread a univerſal conſternation. Solemn proceſſions were made to aſk of God the ceſſation of this ſcourge; but perceiving it made every day farther progreſs, ſome formed little ſocieties, and ſhut themſelves up in retired houſes ſituated in a good air; there they eat only white meats and drank the pureſt wine, avoiding all exceſs, having no communication with any out of the houſe; nor would they be informed of what was going on in public. Muſic, play, and ſome other innocent pleaſures were their only relaxation.

Others, on the contrary, looked upon it as an infallible preſervative to give themſelves up to pleaſures without reſtraint: they paſſed the day and night in taverns, and in thoſe houſes where they could find moſt objects of voluptuouſneſs: nothing was eaſier than entrance at this time; for as death was hourly expected,

every thing was abandoned: no one troubled themſelves to ſhut their doors, and the firſt comer might take whatever he found without any one to oppoſe him. Perſons of more refinement took the middle part between the abſtinence of the one and the licentiouſneſs of the other. They uſed the things of this world with moderation; they did not confine themſelves, but only took the precaution to wear aromatic ſhrubs and flowers, to preſerve themſelves from the infection the air was filled with, from the ſick and dead around them.

In fine, ſome there were who, as the greateſt means of ſafety, choſe a life contrary to humanity and the obligations to ſociety; they quitted their relations and friends and went wandering from place to place where the contagion had not yet appeared; they vainly thought that God's wrath was limited to the city they had abandoned, and would not purſue them

elſewhere. In all theſe various methods the plague took ſome and left others. No remedy ſucceeded: the phyſicians underſtood nothing about it: and which is moſt aſtoniſhing, they acknowledged they did not. All unions were diſſolved: relations and friends were ſeparated, and avoided one another: clowniſh ſervants did whatever was merely neceſſary, and ſometimes nothing, for great ſalaries. The ladies of the firſt rank, the moſt beautiful and chaſte, when attacked by this diſeaſe, finding no women who would attend them, took without ſcruple the firſt man who offered, whether young or old, ſober or debauched, faithful or diſhoneſt; the ſtate of their diſorder and the neceſſity of aſſiſtance did not permit the care that decency preſcribed; and this freedom became afterwards a habit, and altered the manners of thoſe formerly moſt reſpected for their delicacy. There were no funeral rites obſerved; the dead were laid at the door of the houſe, or

thrown out of the window; thoſe whoſe office it was to inter them, piled them up without diſtinction on biers or tables, and carried them to the firſt church-yard without prieſt or prayers. Numbers died in their houſes unknown to any one, the neighbours only diſcovered their death from the ſmell of the bodies, which they were careful to get removed for fear of the infection. This dreadful picture drawn by Boccace was deſcriptive of every city in Italy except Milan, and the north part of the Alps, where this contagion was hardly perceived.

We will now return again to Petrarch. It muſt be remembered that when he left Avignon, Laura was in a ſtate that gave him great inquietude every time he thought of her, and that was continually: ſhe was ſo much changed ſince that time that no one would have known her; this, together with the plague, which took off many of his friends, was no doubt

doubt the cauſe of thoſe diſmal dreams and pre-ſentiments he was now haunted with. "Formerly, ſays Petrarch, when I had quitted Laura, I ſaw her often in my dreams. Her angelic viſion then conſoled me; but at preſent it afflicts and overwhelms me. I think I ſee upon her face compaſſion mixed with grief. I think I hear her ſpeak to me thus: 'Recall that night, when forced to part from you, I left you bathed in tears. I was not able to tell you then, nor would I have done it; but I will tell you at preſent, and you may believe me, you ſhall ſee me no more upon earth.' Oh! what a dreadful viſion. And can it be true that the light is extinguiſhed, which gave me ſuch ſweet and conſoling reflections? Shall I only learn from dreams an account ſo intereſting to me? Shall ſhe herſelf come to announce it? No! It cannot be; Heaven and nature forbid. I truſt I ſhall again ſee that charming face, which is my ſupport and joy, and

the honour of our age. But if it is true that Laura has quitted her beautiful habitation to fly to heaven, let that day be the laſt of my life. Uncertain of my ſtate, I ſigh, I write, I fear, I hope; my ſighs and my verſes ſhall relieve my ſorrow. Shall love ceaſe to ſend his darts to my afflicted heart? Shall my eyes never behold the light of my life? Shall they be condemned to everlaſting tears? Alas! I know not what to think. Is Laura fled to heaven, which is her country, without reflecting that ſhe leaves one upon earth who cannot live without her? This uncertainty agitates me without ceaſing. I am no longer what I was. I reſemble a man who walks in a path he is not ſure of. I open my ears, but I hear no one ſpeak of her I love. I know not what to think, or what to ſay. My ſoul floats between fear and hope. Laura is more beautiful, more chaſte than all others. Perhaps God has taken her from earth to reward her in heaven. If it is ſo,

my

my pleaſures and my pains will ſoon be at an end with my life. Cruel departure! Why ſeparate myſelf from her, if I was ſo ſoon to loſe her?"

The ſixth of April, Petrarch being at Verona on his way to Parma, always occupied with theſe black preſages which foretold the death of Laura, beheld her that morning in a dream, and they held a long converſation, the account of which from his own words is as follows.

"Aurora had diſperſed that thick darkneſs which renders the viſions of night confuſed,* and a bluſh of the ſofteſt crimſon began to enlighten the Eaſt, when I ſaw a beautiful female advancing towards me. Her appearance was like that of the ſpring, and her head was

* Theocritus was of opinion that the dreams which came about the dawn of day were more diſtinct than thoſe of the night. Horace thought otherwiſe: *Poſt mediam noctem viſus cum ſomnia vera*, &c.

crowned with oriental pearls. She had quitted a group of females crowned like herſelf; and as ſhe drew near to me, ſhe ſighed, and gave me a hand which had long been the object of my tendereſt wiſhes."

"HER preſence, and ſuch an extraordinary mark of kindneſs, diffuſed through my ſoul an inexpreſſible pleaſure. 'Do you recollect her, ſhe ſaid, who by engaging the affections of your youth, led you from the common road of life?' While ſhe ſpoke theſe words, which were accompanied with an air of modeſty and earneſtneſs, ſhe ſat down under a laurel and a beech on the ſide of a brook, and commanded me to place myſelf by her. I obeyed."

"NOT know you! my good angel! I ſaid, the tears flowing from my eyes. But tell me quickly, I beſeech you, whether you are in life, or in death? 'In life,

life, ſhe replied. 'Tis you who are in death: and in death muſt you remain, till the time ſhall come when you muſt quit this world. But we have much to ſay, and little time for our interview. The day is at hand. Be brief therefore and recollected.'

"On my expreſſing the moſt pungent grief, to hear that ſhe was no more; ſhe ſaid, 'Petrarch! You will never be happy, ſo long as you continue to be governed by the prejudices of the world. My death, which is the cauſe of ſo much affliction, would be a ſource of happineſs to you, could you but know the ſmalleſt part of my bliſs.' As ſhe ſpoke theſe words, her eyes were lifted towards heaven, and filled with the tendereſt emotions of gratitude. 'To the ſpotleſs ſoul, continued ſhe, death is the deliverance from a darkſome priſon. It is an evil only to thoſe, who are wallowing in the mire of the world.'

"But

"But the tortures, I replied, which barbarous tyrants, ſuch as Nero, Caligula, Mezencius, &c. have inflicted, theſe exhibit death cloathed with terrors. 'It is not to be denied, ſhe ſaid, that death is ſometimes accompanied with ſevere pains. But remember, that the ſevereſt pains which can ſurround a death-bed, are the fears of an eternal puniſhment. For if the ſoul can caſt itſelf upon God, and place an entire confidence in him, death is no more than a ſigh, or a ſhort paſſage from one life to another.'

["I was overwhelmed with ſorrow, and ready almoſt to ſink under my diſtreſs, when I heard a low and mournful voice utter theſe words: *This poor mortal is attached to the preſent life. Yet he lives not, neither is he at peace within himſelf. He is devoted to the world; and ſhall for ever remain the ſlave of this devotion. The world is the ſole object of his thoughts, his words, and his writings,*

I imme-

I immediately recollected a voice which had ſo often been my conſolation; and on turning my eyes towards the place whence it came, I diſcovered our well-known friend. She was wont to appear ſprightly and gay, now ſhe was ſerious and grave."]

"In the flower of my youth, purſued Laura, when you loved me moſt, and when life was dreſſed out in all her charms, then was ſhe bitter, compared with the ſweetneſs of my death. I felt more joy at this moment, than an exile returning to his wiſhed for country. There was but one thing which afflicted me. I was to leave you. I was moved with compaſſion."

"Ah! replied I, In the name of that truth by which you was governed while on earth, and which now you more clearly diſtinguiſh in the boſom of Him to whom all things are preſent, tell me, I conjure

conjure you, whether love gave birth to this compaſſion? Thoſe rigours mixed with ſoftneſs, thoſe tender angers, and thoſe delicious reconciliations which were written in your eyes, have for ever kept my heart in doubt and uncertainty."

"SCARCE had I finiſhed, when I beheld thoſe heavenly ſmiles which have at all times been the meſſengers of peace. 'You have ever, ſhe ſaid with a ſigh, poſſeſſed my heart, and ſhall continue to poſſeſs it. But I was obliged to temper the violence of your paſſion by the movements of my countenance. It was neceſſary to keep you in ignorance. A good mother is never more ſolicitous about her child, than when ſhe appears to be moſt in anger with him. How often have I ſaid, Petrarch does not love; he burns with a violent paſſion. I muſt endeavour to regulate it. But alas! this was a difficult taſk for one, whoſe fears and affections were likewiſe engaged.'

'I said, he must not be acquainted with the state of my heart. He admires so much what he sees without, I must conceal from him what passes within. This has been the only artifice which I have used. Be not offended. It was a bridle which was necessary to keep you in the right road. There was no other method by which I could preserve our souls. A thousand times has my countenance been lighted up with anger, while my heart has glowed with love; but it was my perpetual resolution, that reason, not love, should hold the sovereignty.'

'When I saw you cast down with sorrow and affliction, I gave you a look of consolation. When you were on the brink of despair, my looks were still more tender: I addressed you with a softer air, and soothed you with a kind word: my fears even altered the tone of my voice, you might see them marked on my countenance.

tenance. When you looked pale, and your eyes were bathed in tears; I ſaid, He is very ill, he will certainly die if I take not pity on him. Then it was that you had every ſuccour which virtue could give, and then was you reſtored to yourſelf again. Sometimes you were like the fiery horſe fretted by the ſpur; it was then neceſſary that you ſhould feel the rein, and be managed with the bit. Such has been the innocent artifice by which I have led you on, without the leaſt ſtain to my honour.'

"AH! ſaid I, with a faultering voice, and eyes bedewed with tears, Such ſentiments would be an ample recompenſe for all my ſufferings, had I but courage to believe them. 'Faithleſs man! ſhe ſaid a little angrily, What motive can I have for this declaration, had it not been the true cauſe of that diſtance and reſerve of which you have ſo often complained? In every thing elſe we were agreed: and honour and virtue were the bonds of our affection.

affection. Our love was mutual, at leaſt from the time I was convinced of your attachment. There was only this difference, that one of us diſcovered, while the other concealed the flame. You were hoarſe with crying out, Mercy! help! while I opened not my mouth. Fear and modeſty permitted me not to reveal my emotions. The flame however which is confined, burns more fiercely than that which is at liberty.'

'Recollect the day when we were alone, and when you preſented to me your ſonnets, ſinging at the ſame time,

"This is all my love dares ſay."

'I received them with kindneſs. And after ſuch a proof, could there be the leaſt doubt of my affection? Was not this taking off the veil? My heart was yours, but I choſe to be miſtreſs of my eyes. This you thought unjuſt; and yet with what right could you complain? Was you

you not poſſeſſed of the nobler part? Thoſe eyes which have ſo often been withdrawn becauſe you merited this ſeverity, have they not been reſtored to you a thouſand times? Often have they looked upon you with tenderneſs, and would at all times have done ſo, had I not dreaded the extravagance of your paſſion.'

'But the morning is far advanced, the ſun is emerging from the ocean, and it is with regret that I tell you we muſt now be ſeparated. If you have any thing more to ſay, be expeditious, and regulate your words by the few moments which remain to us.' I had only time to add, 'My ſufferings are fully recompenſed; but I cannot live without you; I wiſh therefore to know, whether I ſhall ſoon follow you.' She was already in motion to depart, when ſhe ſaid, 'If I am not miſtaken, you ſhall remain a long time upon the earth."

We may eaſily imagine the anxiety of Petrarch at theſe multiplied viſions, which ſo poſitively forboded the death of Laura, and the impatience with which he waited for news of her from Avignon. Unfortunately for him the plague had ſtopped all communication, and the couriers could not paſs without the greateſt difficulty. At laſt however, on the ninth of May 1348, Petrarch being at Parma received a letter from his dear Socrates, who informed him that Laura died of the plague the ſixth of April. I will collect every circumſtance relative to it that is to be found in the works of Petrarch.

Gui de Chaliac, phyſician and chaplain to the Pope, who attended thoſe who had the plague, and gives a long account of it, tells us it began in Avignon in January, and that it laſted ſeven months: that in the firſt of theſe months, it ſhewed itſelf by a continual

fever, with ſpitting of blood; and that thoſe whom it ſeized, died generally on, or at the end of the third day: that it was moſt violent in Lent; and that in the three days that preceded the fourth Sunday in Lent, there died at Avignon fourteen hundred perſons. We owe this juſtice to the memory of Clement the VI. that he ſpared neither his attention, care, or charity, to render this calamity leſs fatal at Avignon than it had been in other places. He gave penſions to phyſicians to attend the poor: he bought a field out of the city, which he deſtined to the burial of the infected: he gave conſiderable ſums to thoſe who removed and buried the dead: and he had the moſt regular police obſerved to prevent the ſpreading of the contagion. "And he did a more eſſential kindneſs than all this, ſays one of his hiſtorians; he permitted all his clergy to give a general abſolution in their pariſhes to thoſe who died of this diſeaſe. As to himſelf, he followed the example

example of one of his predeceſſors in the ſame ſituation; he kept cloſe in his apartment, and had very great fires." All the endeavours of this good Pope could not prevent the cruel ravages made by this contagion, which, if we may believe an hiſtorian of that time, carried off in the city of Avignon, in the ſpace of three months, a hundred and twenty thouſand ſouls. Gui de Chaliac was ſeized with it himſelf, but he ſurvived it.

LAURA felt the firſt attacks of it the 3d of April: ſhe had the fever, with ſpitting of blood. As ſhe was perſuaded ſhe ſhould not live beyond the third day, ſhe took the methods her piety and reaſon ſuggeſted to be immediately neceſſary. She received the ſacraments, and made her will the ſame day; after which ſhe waited for death without fear or regret. When ſhe was at the point of death, her relations, her friends, and neighbours gathered around her, though

ſhe was attacked with a malady which terrified all the world. It is a ſingular circumſtance that ſo beautiful a perſon ſhould be ſo beloved by her own ſex. Nothing can be a higher eulogy on her character. Laura, ſeated on her bed, appeared quite tranquil: no hideous and threatening phantoms had power over her divine ſoul. Her companions, who ſtood round her bed, wept and ſobbed aloud. "We are going to loſe a companion, ſaid they, who was the ſoul of our innocent pleaſures; a friend who conſoled us in our chagrins, and whoſe example was a living leſſon. We loſe all in loſing her. Heaven takes her hence as a treaſure of which we were not worthy."

THOUGH Laura was calm and ſerene, it cannot be doubted ſhe was ſenſible of the grief expreſſed by her companions; but entirely occupied with the ſtate ſhe was juſt going to enter, ſhe reaped in ſilence the celeſtial fruits of her virtue. Her ſoul departed gently without ſtruggle,

gle, like a lamp whoſe oil is waſted, which grows fainter and fainter, and is clear to the laſt. She had the air of a weary perſons who ſlumbers, and death had penetrated through all her veins, without diſturbing the ſerenity of her countenance.

From the whole of her ſentiments and character, we have no reaſon to believe this account exaggerated. For, "Her road to heaven, ſays Petrarch, was not to ſeek in death: ſhe had long known and walked in all the paths that lead to it."

She died about ſix in the morning, on the 6th of April 1348. Her body was carried the ſame day at veſpers to the church of the Minor Brothers, and interred in the chapel De la Croix. It was built by Hugues de Sade, her huſband, cloſe to the chapel of St. Ann, which had been erected by his father.

The body of Laura was found there with an Italian ſonnet of Petrarch's in the year 1533; and it was then proved that the Laura of Petrarch, which ſome took it into their heads to doubt, was the ſame with Laura de Noves, wife of Hugues de Sade.

It appears by the will of this lady, that after ſeveral pious legacies ſhe made her huſband her heir, to whom ſhe had brought ten children; ſix boys, and four girls. Her eldeſt ſon Poulon, who was architect of the Metropolitan church at Avignon, and made Dean of that church by the Biſhop, died before Laura, in the twentieth year of his age. Angiere her eldeſt daughter married in 1345 Bertrand Domicellus, lord of Bedarride. She had two thouſand five hundred florins for her portion, a very conſiderable ſum at that time. Her mother left her but one florin, probably on account of her ill conduct after marriage, which was ſuch that

Clement

Clement the VI. at the ſolicitation of her relations, commanded the Nuns of St. Catharine d' Apt on pain of excommunication to receive her, and keep her ſhut up for the reſt of her life. Audibert became Dean of Notre Dame de Dons, where he was placed at twelve years old; and afterwards Provoſt of Tholouſe. Ermeſſenda was a Nun in the convent of St. Laurence, and Procuratrice of that convent. Hugues, or Hugonin, the third ſon, became the eldeſt by the death of Poulon, and the entrance of Audibert into the eccleſiaſtic ſtate. From him deſcend the three branches of the houſe of Sade, eſtabliſhed at Avignon and in Provence. Margerita, the third daughter, died before Laura. Gorcenete was twice married, and poſſeſſed the fortune of her ſiſter Angiere, who made it over to her. Her ſecond huſband was Bernard Ancezuine de Caderouſſe, of one of the firſt houſes in Provence; and ſhe was married a third

time to Raimond de Moulſong, lord of Menamenes. Peter de Sade was Canon of the Metropolitan church. Laura left him but one florin in her will. James, and Jaanet, who died young and without iſſue, ſhe left alſo one florin each.

It is not wonderful that Laura ſhould alter ſo early in life, with ſo many domeſtic ſickneſſes and cares, and the grief ariſing from the conduct of ſome of her children, particularly her eldeſt daughter, ſo delicate as ſhe was on the point of honour herſelf. And if any of her other children behaved ill, as ſhould appear from her leaving them only one florin, it muſt have touched her very ſenſibly, after the care ſhe took in their education, to inſpire them with thoſe ſentiments her own heart was filled with. Add to this, ſhe loſt her eldeſt ſon, who appears to have been amiable, at a very trying period of his life, and ſome children when young,

and

and had much unkindneſs to ſupport in the behaviour of her huſband.

Modesty was her peculiar characteriſtic; and it appears ſhe was not puffed up with her birth, her beauty, or the fame ſhe derived from the praiſes of Petrarch. She was not only magnificent but elegant in her dreſs, particularly in the ornaments of her head and the manner of tying up her hair: and we have ſeen ſhe wore a coronet of gold or ſilver, and ſometimes for variety a garland of flowers which ſhe gathered herſelf in the fields. Petrarch ſpeaks of two rich dreſſes ſhe had; the one of purple, edged with azure, and embroidered with roſes; the other, enriched with gold and jewels. In the firſt, he compares Laura to the Phœnix, which naturaliſts deſcribe with purple feathers and a blue tail ſtrewed over with roſes. 'Some, ſays he, place this bird in the mountains of Arabia; but 'tis flown to our climate." It is doubtful

doubtful whether Laura was fond of all this magnificence. It ſhould ſeem ſhe only conformed to it to pleaſe her family and ſupport her rank; for Petrarch ſays of her in one of his ſonnets, that ſhe deſpiſed all thoſe vain nets in which mankind were taken captive.

"RANK, pearls, rubies and gold you "reject as a weight that depreſſes the "mind; and even the rare gem of beauty "is only pleaſing to you when adorned by "virtue, that treaſure of treaſures."

SHE was extremely reſerved in her behaviour toward the men; and this was neceſſary in the corrupt age in which ſhe lived, and in a city where the moſt innocent actions were often ill interpreted. An old lady ſaid one day to her, that life was preferable to honour. "What is it I hear? replied Laura with warmth: change the order if you pleaſe, and place honour before life: without it there is neither beauty nor happineſs in the world.

world. A woman who loſes this precious treaſure, is no better than a mummy, a vile corpſe which no one can behold without horror. A gnawing worm devours her continually, and her condition is a hundred times more wretched than that of the dead. The grief of Lucretia in this ſituation ought to have ſerved inſtead of a poinard."

A RESERVE ſo uniform and conſtant generally renders people ſerious and rigid, and gives them an air of unpoliteneſs: but Laura was the contrary of all this; and Petrarch adviſes all her ſex to obſerve Laura, to look at her eyes, and learn from her how they may unite gaiety, politeneſs, grace, and the air of faſhion, with wiſdom and the principles of religion. "Imitate, ſays he, if you can, her language and her manners. When ſhe ſpeaks, her eloquence and modeſty inchant every heart. When ſhe is ſilent, her looks charm and inſtruct; but do

not attempt to vie with her in perſon. Her eyes, her features are a preſent of nature, which art will never be able to attain."

THE education of Laura ſeems to have been like that of other ladies of her age; they were taught to ſew and ſpin, but very rarely to read or to write. Thoſe who knew how to read were called learned ladies, and were much ſought, and in high eſteem when they were met with, which was generally in convents. We find that Petrarch always praiſes the underſtanding and goodneſs of Laura, but never ſpeaks of its having been adorned with cultivation: "That her words had the dignity of nature, which raiſed her above her education, and that her voice was a ſource of continual enchantment, ſoft, angelic and divine; that it could appeaſe the wrath, diſſipate the clouds, and calm the tempeſts of the ſoul." An elevated turn of mind ſupplied the advantages of a liberal education, and her ſweetneſs of temper won upon every

heart. How touching is it to view this amiable woman, ſinking under diſtreſſes from an unhappy marriage, from imprudent children, and inwardly pining at heart with an attachment that in a ſtate of liberty would have been her felicity and glory; continually to behold the object of this affection, a prey to the agonizing ſenſations of this fatal and tyrannic paſſion! Nothing was more ſimple than the life of Laura, occupied in the education of her children, and her domeſtic cares. She went out only to perform the duties of ſociety, or to enjoy the benefit of the air with the companions of her walks. In the ſuburbs of the Cordeliers, there was a little houſe built in the Gothic ſtile, with one window to the South, and another to the North, and a ſtone ſeat before the door, which was called the houſe of madam Laura. She uſed ſometimes to ſit here alone with a penſive air, muſing and talking to herſelf. In the heat of ſummer it was a

cuſtom

cuſtom anciently at Avignon for the greateſt people to ſit out at the door for the benefit of the freſh air. She ſometimes appeared at ſun-riſe at the window. What a felicity for Petrarch when he happened to paſs that ſpot! "I riſe, ſays he, at break of day to ſalute Aurora, the ſun that follows her, and above all that other ſun which has dazzled me from my tender youth, and has every day the ſame bright effect on my heart. Other lovers deſire the ſhades of evening, and hate Aurora: but it is quite the contrary with me; my pleaſures are ſuſpended till night folds up her ſhades." It appears that Sennuccio, the friend of Petrarch, lived in the neigbourhood of Laura, and that Petrarch had deſired he would inform him when Laura appeared at the window, which ſhe often did at ſun-riſe.

SUCH was the beautiful, the amiable

Laura. I know of no character, however illuſtrious, that has been done ſo much juſtice to as Laura's by the pen of Petrarch, who yet always declares his praiſes little equal to her worth. I will not undertake to expreſs the grief of Petrarch on this event. "I dare not think of my condition, ſays he, much leſs can I ſpeak of it." He lived ſeveral days without eating or drinking, nouriſhing himſelf with his tears.

It was the cuſtom formerly to write down in a book they read the moſt frequently, the thing they wiſhed to retrace. On the manuſcript of Virgil I have mentioned, ornamented with paintings by Simon de Sienna, which was Petrarch's favourite book, he wrote theſe lines:

"Laura, illuſtrious by her own virtues, and long celebrated in my verſes, appeared to my eyes for the firſt time the

6th

6th of April 1327, at Avignon, in the church of St. Claire, at the firſt hour of the day: I was then in my youth. In the ſame city, on the ſame day, and at the ſame hour, in the year 1348, this luminary diſappeared from our world. I was then at Verona, ignorant of my wretched ſituation. That chaſte and beautiful body was buried the ſame day after veſpers in the church of the Cordeliers: her ſoul returned to its native manſion in heaven. To retrace the melancholy remembrance of this great loſs, I have written it with a pleaſure mixed with bitterneſs in a book I often refer to. This loſs convinces me there is no longer any thing worth living for. Since the ſtrongeſt cord of my life is broken, with the grace of God I ſhall eaſily renounce a world where my cares have been deceitful, and my hopes vain and periſhing."

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